LOOK OUT FOR "THE JUDAS LEGACY," A THRILLING STORY, NEXT WEEK

THE CHICAGO LEDGER

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WHILE SHE WAS BLIND;

Or, Back From the Realms of Night.

By ERNEST De LANCY PIERSON.

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CHAPTER I.

UNDER COVER OF THE FOG.

"What's the trouble? What have you stopped for?" came in an angry voice from the carriage, which had come to a standstill. A moment later a young man's head was thrust out of the window of the vehicle, and he repeated the question.

The driver, wreathed in fog, looking in his glistening rubber coat like some strange amphibious monster, turned slowly around with a scowl.

"Eh, what's that? What have I stopped for? Why, 'cause I can't see a foot ahead o' me, and I ain't goin' to kill my horses by a tumble in the ditch."

"It's my opinion you don't know where you are!"

"Well, I guess yer about right there," came the reply with provoking coolness. "I'm hanged if I do know where I be," and he shook the moisture from his dripping hat.

The passenger flung the door open and hopped out on the muddy road. The fog whirled about him in eddying wreaths. As he made his way forward, it was like swimming in a gray sea. Being a sensible young man he could reason that there was nothing to be gained by quarreling with the coachman. If they were indeed lost in the fog, he must depend on that worthy to help him out of the predicament. The chilly air of night acted like a cold douche to his angry heat, and it was in a calm voice that he addressed the grotesque object on the box.

"Where do you suppose we are now?" he asked mildly.

"Somewhere in the neighborhood of Manhattan Gardens, though I would not be willin' to make no bets on it," grumbled the driver.

"You are not sure then?"

"How could a body be sure where he was at, in a puddin' like this?" waving his whip around in the air with a gesture of disgust. "I wouldn' want to take my affidavy that we was on dry land or afloat!"

The young man looked about him blankly. There was absolutely nothing in view but the gray walls that hemmed them in. The glistening carriage in the midst of the mire and the steaming horses with the high-perched driver resembled a heathen idol surrounded by incense.

"We can't go on; it's too risky," said the man on the box, "and the night is settin' in. Like enough ef I was to try it, I'd break my horse's legs in a ditch. I see they was layin' some sort of a pipe line as we was comin' long, 'fore the fog got so thick."

"Just wait a minute until I see what there is on ahead," said the young man, as he started forward. "We may perhaps be near the place I am looking for."

He plunged into the mist, which closed around him like the waves of a sea, and disappeared from the view of the coachman.

"And this is the climate that we Americans are always bragging about!" he grumbled, as he made his way along over the muddy road. "This freak weather must be a special English importation."

He paused and listened in the hopes of hearing some sound of life to show the nearness of a habitation, but there was only the tinkle of a distant creek.

"What! Twelve o'clock! I'm half an hour late. Was there ever such luck? What will Marcia think? After I have spent months in brinstar her to the point of consenting to elope with me—to fail now! It's maddening!"

He peered about, but could not see a yard before him.

"She'll think Providence is against us, poor little girl. I'm afraid it is all up with us now. That ogre of an uncle will carry her off, to get her out of my way. It's my opinion that he has scooped up her little fortune, so wants her to marry some rich noodle who will not make a row about it. Confound him! He can keep the fortune so long as I have Marcia! Oh, was there ever a fog so unwelcome! I suppose I might walk about here all night and not come on the house. Hello! what's that, I wonder?"

He heard the sound of carriage wheels.

"Some other unfortunate, or perhaps some one thereabouts, the neighborhood. Well, after all, would it be any use to go to the house at this hour? The dear girl has probably by this time renounced the whole thing, and is in a fine rage. I never saw her in a rage, but this is enough to provoke an angel."

He listened. The carriage was rolling away. The sound of the wheels grew fainter, and then ceased.

"There! I believe that coachman has made his escape. A pretty fix! I don't know whether it is better to sit down and wait for morning, or to try and bunder out in the dark. Manhattan Gardens must be in the neighborhood, but where, is the question. Well, I have lost Marcia, and there is really nothing else worth thinking about." He moved on cautiously. "And here is the place where the rascal turned and gave me the slip! It will go hard with him if we ever meet. I feel like wishing him 'accidenta,' as the Italian beggars do when you refuse them alms. I don't want him to quite break his neck, but I would like him well jarred. There's a dog barking. Some house must be near. Perhaps I could get a lodging until morning."

Still he seemed to be in a wilderness. He walked blindly in the direction of the sound. He had begun to think it all useless, when he suddenly saw a glimmering, shadowy white form in the mist.

"Looks like a ghost," he thought, not at all alarmed. "Mighty unpleasant night for a self-respecting spook to be abroad."

But he was not disposed to joke as he drew nearer this strange object. The white figure was very close to him now. Horror of horrors! It had no arms!

"Is things what they seem, or is visions about?" Ralph asked himself as he rubbed his eyes. Only for a moment, and then he laughed loud and long.

"Well! To think that I did not recognize at once the armless water nymph that guards Carlyle's moss-rimmed fountain. How I am at last, and much good it will do me. Marcia would not have spent many minutes waiting in this fog."

The house, a handsome villa set among embowering trees, was all dark, except for one room on the ground floor.

"Carlyle is in his den," he thought, "but Marcia has gone to bed. Well, we counted on the old map going to his rest at nine, as usual. If he is still up, there must have been a hitch in the proceedings. I wonder what he is sitting up for?"

He walked nearer and saw that a curtain was drawn aside sufficiently to give a glimpse of the interior of the room.

"Might as well see how the land lies," he thought. "If he were friendly now, I might strike him for a lodging? Not likely, after he was so abusive when I asked for Marcia's hand that he would prove very hospitable. Hello! He seems to have a visitor."

It was a well-furnished library into which he was looking. In an arm-chair before a table sat an old man, and the face clearly outlined in the lamp-light was an angry one. His eyes, that must have been cold

and stern under ordinary circumstances, were shining with a disagreeable light. His thin face was flushed, his bony hands clenched as if to deliver a blow.

Before him on the table lay a roll of greenbacks, and papers were scattered in some confusion. A safe near, stood open.

The visitor had evident object of the old man's rage sat opposite. He was dressed with taste and seemed to be turning a soft hat nervously in his hands. He had his back to Ralph.

"Another suitor for Marcia," thought the latter. "If that is so, he is getting about the same welcome as I did."

At that moment the old man seemed to fling some particularly strong expletive at the visitor, who rose and went toward the door. Ralph drew back into the shadow of the shrubbery, so that the stranger should not see him. It was some moments before the front door opened and the latter appeared hurriedly. The door was not closed again, but Ralph heard swift and stealthy steps. Then a cry—a woman's shriek of terror—rang through the night. For one dazed moment Ralph stood motionless. Then he ran after the departing visitor as fast as his feet would carry him.

The man had now followed the path, but plunged into the shrubbery at the back. Ralph, in pursuit, saw lights flash out from the house and heard the confused sound of voices, but continued on his way. The only thought in his mind just then was to overhaul the fugitive. He tore on in spite of obstacles, but fate favored the pursuer. The fog hid him, and Ralph stumbled over a stone and fell. He was getting up to his feet again, when a strong hand seized him.

"Ho! you murderous villain! I got ye! Ye didn't get off so well as ye confederate escaped! You'll 'ang for this night's work. I tell ye!"

"Why, Higgins," cried Ralph, "don't choke me, before you see what you are about!" For he had recognized Mr. Carlyle's English butler.

"Ho! Well I knows what I'm about!" cried the servant, taking a more secure hold. "I've sent John for the police, an' you'll be in charge for forty winks."

Ralph was getting angry.

"Don't entangle me, you fool! Don't use that cry to letting the real criminal escape!" Then he added: "You ought to know me. I've called on your young mistress often enough. What has happened? You need not hold me! I'll go back to the house fast enough. That's just where I want to go."

Higgins relaxed his hold sulkily.

"Master enough's happened! Mr. Carlyle 's been killed. Of course I know you, Mr. Dunstan, but that's neither 'ere nor there! You and the old goat wasn't good friends, and ye pretext will 'ardly 'old worry 'igh. I calls 'em, an' I finds ye rackin' off on 'im right sweetheart like to 'ave you come along o' me an' give a account of yerself in the police station."

"All right, Higgins. Don't get excited. Just tell me how Miss Marcia is—there's a good fellow!"

"None of yer good-fellerin' to me!" answered the other, resenting the kindly tone. "I ain't to be come over with no palaverin', I ain't."

So Ralph tried no more persuasion on the surly servant, who had never viewed him with no very favor. They walked in silence back to the house. The front door was open, and Rose, the housemaid, was looking out anxiously.

"Oh, I'm so glad to see you, Mr. Higgins!" she cried. "Not when a dreadful thing has happened, but the willyum is lurkin' about seekin' whom he may devour!"

"What is the story exactly, I guess, if you are a peach," said Higgins, chuckling. He was fond of Rose, and she knew it. "Ow's Miss Marcia by this time? Go and tell her that I've got the criminal—that's ways a feller that was scootin' off persuicute, which was suspicious at this time of night."

"Lawk, Higgins! Whatever are you up to now?" whispered Rose, as Ralph stepped into the lighted hall. "Don't ye know that that is Miss Marcia's steady?"

"Steady or unsteady, 'e's got to answer fer it," growled Higgins.

"Well, you'll get herself disliked," said Rose. "You'll soon find out what a lunkhead you are—annoyin' a gent in this way—because—"

"Cause why—"

"Miss Marcia saw the murderer!"

CHAPTER II.

THE FATAL VISITOR.

The butler looked somewhat disgusted at this announcement, which might go to show that his said head was down a bundle.

"How is Miss Marcia?" asked Dunstan eagerly. "Tell her I am here, will you?"

"Lor', Mr. Dunstan, she's just goin' from one faint to another. Mrs. Bond's been workin' over her ever since she seen the dreadful sight. But she come to long enough to tell us that she saw the man. She don't know who he is—never seen him before. Gives me the shivers to think of it! the gas was low, but she seen the man's fair sight of his face—when the blow was struck. She says she'd know him among a thousand—'twas enough to brand the likeness on her soul, ye might say. Ay, stobbin' in the back, ye might say he was—the coward!"

"But is it quite certain your master is dead?" said Rose, as the door shut on the one with him? Has anything been done for him?"

"Oh, he's dead!" said Higgins morosely. "I 'opes I knows my duty, sir. I hexamined the body before I left the study myself."

"Well, I'll examine him, too," said Ralph, approaching the study door.

"Hexcuse me, sir," and Higgins barred the way. "e's not to be touched or moved till the coroner's come, the doctor and the police. I 'opes I knows my duty!"

"If you do, you'll have your stand out of my way!" the young man replied angrily. "Your master may have come to life by this time, and I'm not going to let him bleed to death!"

"Come, Higgins," said Rose aside, "don't be a mule! Some young gentleman of hes' about hetherto you do. Miss Marcia would give him the sack if he was rough."

Higgins moved reluctantly aside, grumbling.

"One of you come along to help me," said Dunstan, "and I shall need some brandy, camphor, spirits of any kind."

"Go you with the gentleman," said Rose to the butler. "I'll fetch the things."

She dashed off and was back with a bottle of brandy as they were entering the library. Mr. Caryle still lay on the floor, his head had fallen forward, and both arms were stretched out before him. His body had kept him from slipping down on the floor.

"Good Evilus!" exclaimed Higgins, starting back with evident fear.

"It's moved since I seen 'im! 'E's moved his 'ands!"

"Are you sure?"

"I'll be ready to it in court. That 'and was direct by this paperweight—see? And 'other touched the limp. 'E's flung 'em out since. Oh, Lor', 'e's not dead!"

"Well, there's no need of terror about that," said Dunstan coolly.

"It shows that there may be life in him yet. I'll see that nothing is done to him for him until the doctor comes," and he took the bottle of brandy, and tried to force some between the lips.

The old man was ghastly white. There was no sign of returning life, and no sign of hope. A dreadful pool on the floor made Ralph feel faint. Just then a sound of carriage wheels was heard.

"Eve's the doctor, I guess!" cried Higgins, recovering from his fear. "I'll go. What we need for him until the doctor comes," and he took the bottle of brandy, and tried to force some between the lips.

The old man was ghastly white. There was no sign of returning life, and no sign of hope. A dreadful pool on the floor made Ralph feel faint. Just then a sound of carriage wheels was heard.

"Eve's the doctor, I guess!" cried Higgins, recovering from his fear. "I'll go. What we need for him is a stimulant. Ye don't know what's proper. An' there's no call now for strangers mixin' in in our affairs."

"Be very careful, my dear," said Ralph, very spare, keen eyed, and shrewd. He was fond of Rose, and she knew it perfectly.

"There's life in him yet!" he cried.

"Thank heaven!" said Rose. "As I 'opes now the willyum is lurkin' about seekin' whom he may devour!"

"What insolence!" cried Marcia, her violet eyes flashing. "I'll discharge him for that!"

"Oh, it's all right, dearie—only over-zeal. I don't know but it may look suspicious to other people, too. What was I doing in the grounds at that hour? will be asked. I don't know that I will tell them. I was intending to rob the house of its choicest treasure." And he flung the girl fondly into his arms and kissed her.

"But I saw the murderer!" she said, clinging to him with a convulsive shudder. "I saw him strike the blow! If I could draw it used to, I could make a perfect picture of him. I was trying, while I was upstairs, just to outline the face, for fear of forgetting it, and I can't—I can't see! I can't make a straight mark!"

"Of course you could, you poor little thing," said Ralph fondly. "Why you have had shock enough to half-paralyze you! That will all come right with rest."

"Oh, I grew sick with nervousness, waiting for uncle to get his usual late night! I left him busy with some papers, and I think he must have gone to sleep over them. Then, when he awakened, perhaps he stopped to do some unfinished work. He was not expecting to know. If he had dismissed a task, he would do it."

"But his study door? He did not enter by the front door? He did not ring?"

"No, not that! There was no sound, except once when uncle went to look about as he always did before he went to bed. I waited some time for him to come upstairs. Then I went down and opened the library door. Oh, Ralph! Can I ever get away from that sight? It will haunt me forever!"

At that moment Dr. Grey appeared.

"Just now he moved an eyelid, and I felt the fluttering of a pulse. He cannot live, but he is not dead yet. He may speak. He may tell us the name of his murderer before he dies," were his words.

CHAPTER III.

AN ANTIQUE BUTTON.

"I must go," said Dunstan, standing up. "If he speaks, I must be there. There ought to be witnesses."

"Then I will come, too!" exclaimed Marcia. "I will not be left alone!"

"Dear child," said the physician, who was an old friend, "you had better go to bed. You are overwrought. You will need all your nerve. Go and try to rest."

"Rest, uncle!" cried Marcia hysterically. "Rest, after such a tragedy! What do you think I am made of? I am not a child. I insist that I be sent to bed. I must bear my share of the trouble." And she drew up her slender form with a little haughty gesture that thrilled Dunstan with a new sensation. He disliked the imperious nature in Marcia, but her childish dimples and roses.

"It's not a sight for a girl!" grumbled Dr. Grey, shaking off the hand from the ghastly horror of it.

"A woman must face the trials and tragedies that God sends into her life," said Marcia, with unconscious pathos in her voice. The fact was that the presence of Dunstan made her feel strong.

Dunstan opened the library door, guarding his master like a surly bull dog.

"He is dead!" was the first thing he perceived explosively; as they neared the couch; "e's a-hopenin' is b'eyes!"

His hands were trembling, but there was not strength enough to raise himself.

"If he only lives to point out the assassin!" said Dr. Grey fervently. "But we must remember that he words may not be rational."

"Let him see me first!" cried Marcia. "All the rest of you stand back! You may frighten him. If he knows me, he will be sane enough, rational, and I can coax him to make an effort to speak."

"Child, you are wise!" said Dr. Grey.

They all fell back, leaving Marcia to go alone to the couch. Ralph heard the sound of labored breathing were on. The sahen was ghastly, but still covered his face. All at once the heavy lids lifted.

"Marcia!" said a choked, hoarse voice. It was not the voice of a man whom they knew her. The doctor handed Marcia the glass of brandy and water.

"Try if he can swallow a little," he whispered.

"Uncle," said Marcia, in her most caressing tone, which Dunstan thought might almost have moved a statue, "you know me by this for me, won't you? You are very ill, and I will help you."

The heavy lids lifted once more. He stared at the girl, and then slowly turned his head and looked at Dunstan and Ralph, as if they were glass eyes moved by mechanism. Then he turned back to the one where his strange visitor had sat. Slowly and unsteadily he lifted his arm and pointed with trembling finger.

"Murderer! Seize him! Help! help!" he cried, all the same strained unnatural voice.

A fierce gleam of anger blazed in the glazing eyes. In imagination he saw there the man who had struck the murderous blow.

"Seize him!" he cried. "He will escape! He is guilty! Can't you see?"

"Yes, uncle!" cried Marcia, quivering with excitement. "Yes! Who is he? What's his name? Is it Will Bond him? Is he tracked! His name? You know his name?"

The old man made an effort to articulate, speak, but he could not. Then he pressed her hand.

"He knows!" she cried, but he cannot speak!"

She thought for a moment profoundly. "I know!" she exclaimed, "uncle, we must get him to write the name! You will be going to say over the letters of the alphabet and when I come to the right letter, you must press my hand. You understand? In that way we can spell out his name."

She waited for no reply.

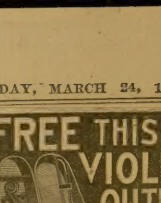
"He understands!" she cried, and she began to repeat the letters slowly. At the sound of the letter "m" he felt a pressure. The dying man's gaze seemed to fix itself on her face with an imploring expression. "m-m" she exclaimed eagerly. "Oh, but this takes time!"

Ah, yes! And the sands in the hour glass were failing fast!

The experiment continued. The second letter was soon gained for it was "a." But that was the last. The heavy lids drooped, never to be lifted in this world again, and the fashion of it had passed away forever for John Caryle.

Marcia burst into tears. "Oh, it is worse than if we never had had any hope!" she sobbed.

The doctor and Ralph hurried to the side of the victim, hoping it might be only a transient faintness, but they saw there was no hope. The sahen hue of death had settled upon the rigid face. Dunstan became conscious of stepping on some small, hard object. He stooped and picked it up.



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"Madam, I can never cure you of this throat trouble unless you stop talking and give your throat a complete rest."

"But, doctor," objected his patient, "I'm very careful what I say. I never use harsh language, or anything of that kind."

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How Grandma Viewed Them.

"I'm glad Billy had the sense to marry a settled old maid," said Grandma Winkum at the wedding.

"Why, grandma?" asked the son.

"Well, 'cause Billy, and widders is kinder overrulin' and upsettin'. But old maids is thankful and willin' to please."

A Dainty Little Maid.

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"Because," answered his father, "the President does not go hunting then. They've got to sleep some time."

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Fond of the Evidence.

A case was being tried on the charge of selling liquor illegally. The whisky was the principal evidence. Jury retired to try the evidence.

Judge—presently—What is the verdict?

Foreman of the Thirsty Jury—Your honor, we want more evidence.

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Her Friends.

"He asked her to say the word that would make him happy for life."

"Did she?"

"No; she said yes."

(Continued from page three.)

It was a stove button, and he had crushed the link flat, but the button—an antique silver coin set in a quaint rim of Etruscan gold—was intact.

"Marcia," he whispered, as he drew the young girl out of the room, "look at this! Did you ever see it before?"

The young girl shook her head. "Never—it must have belonged to the tramp, dear."

"Bump! He was no tramp then!" said Ralph, examining the fine Tiffany's mark on it. And he was well dressed—the rascal! I remember that, even in the glimpse I had of him."

"This may be a clew," said Marcia. "Shall you give it up to the police?"

"I think I'll have a try at this mystery. It's not a common button, and they'll remember something about it, no doubt. The room has not been searched yet. Something else may be found."

But when the police made a second search, nothing was discovered, save that the work of greenbacks to which Higgins had alluded, was gone!

CHAPTER IV.
THE LOST KNIFE.

The man who had reached out of the library as if he felt that a ghost was chasing him, heard more material footsteps after him. He tore on in mad haste through the shrubbery to a back lane. The fog was his friend. His friend, too, that at last he dared to choose open fields where he could see a few steps before him. He did not mean to go to the nearest railway station, but intended to walk to another which was several miles off in a southerly direction.

He did not mind traveling in the cars all night, but he did not like the idea of being trombling a little now. He would be glad of any companionship, however slight. Once he was half a mile from the house, he took a knife from his pocket, and wiped off a stain from the blade. Then he tried it a second, and then threw it away.

"I never expected to do such a work with that memento I brought from Spain," he muttered to himself. "I must get the first ship homeward bound. I made it plain to him that he really owed me the money, for did he not swindle my father out of more than, I think, more, than I asked. 'All legitimate business,' said the old villain to me. 'The money was mine—that's legitimate, too, and I never intended to strike him till he proved too contankerous. I'm not to be blackmailed. I'm no saint, but I always stopped short at—Well, he was a fool, and he's havin' cheated him out of many years of his life, most time for him to begin to think, anyway. I'm safe. No one saw me go in or out. If he hadn't come out to look about the grounds, I'd have left the money and the thing, and 'twas rather late for a call. He didn't seem glad to see me, either."

He stopped suddenly as if struck by a blow. "By Jupiter! I've left my grip! My fine cut glass brushes for fear his valet, 'she saw me!' I know the light fell full on my face! I might come back for it, but she would know me. I did not stop to examine her face, but she will make no mistake about mine. A word from her can hang me. I feel the noose on my neck! Safe! I will never be safe while that girl is on the same planet with me!"

He went on more slowly. The thought of that witness to his crime seemed to strike him with sudden weakness. He clear his feet with deadly weights. He took a flask from his pocket and drank. Then some warmth came back to his veins, and he felt a little courage.

"It's a fool's life," he said. "Afraid of a slip of a girl! What's a girl, anyway? I hope I have wit enough to deal with her. I am all right now! "Likely she was too frightened to see straight. And he hurried on with renewed courage for a few minutes. But troublesome thoughts still continued to harass him.

"The worst of it is, she may know me, and I was so fixed in the moment. How do think I wouldn't recognize her. I don't know her well enough to get out of her way. But a great deal will depend on this place, so it's well my business is in New York. I'll stop at the hotel at some country hotel and wire Jennings so that he won't cause a hue and cry after me. I'll have to drop Jennings, for I don't want a partner any more."

He walked on sturdily till the fog began to lift a little, and in the east a glimmering light showed that morning was coming. At last the sunrise found him looking at a long, white building that manifested few signs of life. Most of the lower shutters were still closed, but a sleepy looking girl was sweeping the piazza. Some trees in the place, so it's well my business is in New York. I'll stop at the hotel at some country hotel and wire Jennings so that he won't cause a hue and cry after me. I'll have to drop Jennings, for I don't want a partner any more."

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"A good place to sleep," thought the pedestrian wearily, "and to eat, if I can sleep any more. Humph! 'Macbeth hath murdered sleep' now!"

Yet when he had eaten and felt refreshed he found that he could sleep. He was footsore and weary, and the memory of a nightmare full of rehearsals of the scene he had passed through, and the haunting and terrible cry chill that crept through his veins when he realized the awful truth— "I have killed a man!"

It was twilight when he awoke, and an odor of hot coffee reached the house. He did not think it best to be too secluded lest it might awaken suspicion, so he went down into the office where two farmers were looking at the evening paper. He felt a sensation of cold water were running down his spine when he saw it. He was prepared somewhat, however, for the line of conversation that reached him.

"Kinder plucky in that hired man to cellar the murderer," said one.

At these words the listener's heart beat fast. He longed to ask a question, but he only waited in silence.

Who could the captured be? Ah! he remembered that some one had given him a chase. Oddly enough he had not thought of him before! Now he felt as if there was a new foe in the field.

The second farmer was of the slow and cautious kind. He did not jump at conclusions.

"Done with a knife, eh? Well, well! Sort a queer coincidence! I found a knife today. I was ploughin' that five-acre field nigh Si Jones'."

The listener gasped, but smothered an exclamation.

"I see somethin' shinin' in a clump of weeds. Look a-here. 'Taint no American knife! Looks murderous, don't it? I think it was a Dago done that deed! This is just the weapon for 'em. They cut their bread and cheese with it, an' its handy for any other purposes."

Then before the dilating eyes of the criminal was displayed the instrument of the crime.

"Sho! 'tis a savage-looking blade," said the other, holding it up and viewing it critically.

Then for the first time nothing the newcomer, he said in a friendly way: "Have you seen the evenin' paper? Gee!—Makes a feller feel shivery to have such a thing happen right amongst us. But they'll ketch him. I'm sartin of that as if I was at the hangin'."

The man addressed grew paler, and the hand he held out for the paper shook like an autumn leaf in the wind.

He seemed to read, but he saw no words. He read no more he knew that the paper could tell him!

"Very strange!" he murmured, seeing that he was expected to say something.

"I'm goin' down to-night to Tarkville to police headquarters," the farmer said with an important air.

"Oh, shucks!" said the other. "Better keep out of the city. They'll ring you in as a witness, an' you couldn't go to a blizzard. Don't ketch me gittin' roped in any sich!"

"You hain't got no call, Sperri, Griffin," said the other. "Here's a wild beast a-roamin' free, a-seekin whom he may devour. You'd feel different if one of your kin hed bin cut off in the flower of his day.

"John Brown was the kind of a flower 'never I heard on," said the other grimly. "Less it was a snap-dragon!"

"That don't matter. I guess that killed him," said his friend, "an' I'd help put the law on his back with the greatest pleasure in life."

He wrapped up the Spanish knife carefully and put it away, while the former owner of it wondered with a sickening pang if he had left any fatal stains on it.

He felt that he could not endure being cast into custody charged with the murder just them, so he made his way out to the porch and sat down with his plans for the future till the trim maid told him that supper was ready.

Afterward his nerves were steady enough for him to read what the paper said. There were great black headlines long lines long or gentlemen. SATISFACTION HOSIERY CO., Dept. 5, Rahway, N. J. When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

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Old Egypt's Gold Mines.

Prof. R. D. George of the University of Colorado suggests that the ancient Egyptians obtained the larger part of their gold from the old workings near Coptos, latitude 26 degrees north, and from the mountains some distance to the south. The mountains to the south of Coptos are probably the mines for which the tribes of the twelfth dynasty sacrificed the lives of many thousand men. Here are the old workings who wanted gold was to invade Nubia and take possession of the mines. Just as when they wanted copper they drove back the nomadic tribes of Sinai and built fortresses to protect their mines. The Nubian gold workings of which Prof. George speaks are placed in the midst of a mountainous region group surrounded on all sides by a waterless desert. Here may be seen tunnels and shafts penetrating the mountains to almost unknown depths.

Three hundred stone huts shelter 300 miles used in pulverising the ore; immenses cisterns are caught the scanty water supply from the upper slopes; and near them stand the sloping tables on which the gold-bearing ore was washed. Records show that these mines were worked with little interruption for twenty centuries by the Egyptians, and there is no means of knowing how long they were worked by the Nubians before them.

In the inscriptions of the New Empire the kinds and quantities of gold are mentioned; and in one of the Tell-el-Amarna letters, written during the eighteenth dynasty, the king of Babylon accuses Amenophis III. of Egypt of sending him a mass of base metal for gold. He says: "The twenty minas of gold you sent me contained, when melted down, only five minas of pure gold." So that the "gold brick" even then was not unknown.

Interpolation.

The Ragged Heroine—Merciful heavens! I am perishing from the cold!

Voice from the Gallery—Sweep up de snow-storm, an' make a bonfire!

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WILDHAM.

A MYSTERY OF THE NORTH WOODS.

By JAMES MILFORD MERRILL.

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Begun in No. 11, March 17. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER V.

THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

The man who confronted Ardyke, with sowing brow and clenched rifle, was the one he had seen at the river slide a few hours earlier in the day, Jake Lenhart by name. The fellow's face was white with passion, and his whole aspect was that of a man overcome with feeling.

"Sit down, Mr. Lenhart, I am pleased to see you," said Ardyke, his jaws giddy enough, and at the same time placing his back against the closed door of the little back room in which reposed the, body of the beautiful unknown. His apprehensions were aroused lest this man should discover the nature of that room's occupant.

"You dirty thief!" began Lenhart.

"Never mind hard words, my good fellow," interrupted Ardyke in a conciliatory tone. "I am here because I thought this cabin was not needed by its owner for a time. In fact, my friend and myself got permission from the owner, who gave us the key, and told us to occupy it as long as we liked." The speaker produced a small brass key from his pocket and held it up for the other's inspection.

The angry look softened as Lenhart said: "Do you know Bennett Wyman?"

"Al Bates of Logtown?"

"Yes."

"I should remark. He was hunting down on Beaver Ridge when I was here that time I speak of. So he loaned the key and let you hev it, eh? That's jest like Al. I s'pose he told you the shanty b'longed ter him?"

"That's exactly what he did," declared Ardyke.

"Wal, by mighty. I'd like ter git a claw onto Al. I'd make it a warm day for him, about a minnit. Wher' is the cuss anyhow?"

"Can't tell you that. He was at Laketon when we got the key."

"The scalawag!" exclaimed Ardyke's visitor, his dark look changing to a smile. His long rifle at once lowered, and he extended a hairy hand to the pinch. "Shake, mister, but I yalled ye a dum thief afore I knowed the circumstances. I know Al; he loves ter jest, and thought he'd play a joke on me. It's all right, and no harm done as yit. Where ye from?" "You've got one faint yet?"

"Yes," said Ardyke, "I have."

"He don't 'pear to be here less he's in yonder," and the speaker's long arm pointed to the behind the door. At the same time he advanced as if to examine for himself.

"No, he isn't in there," Ardyke interposed, falling back so as to more completely shield the door. "Won't you sit up and have a bite? I want to be friends with you, Mr. Lenhart."

The man's jaw dropped, and a broad grin overspread his face. He set his gun down against the wall and accepted the proffered chair. Flint shoved toward the table on which remains of a meal still smoked.

The fellow fell to and ate as though famished. He was silent during the meal, and Ardyke drew his own stool near to the inner door, and anxiously watched and waited. There was a look on the face of his visitor not altogether reassuring. Our friend had no thoughts of trusting him very far. He was an ignorant hunter and trapper, with the deepest, cunning eyes of the half-breed. Ardyke distrusted him at the outset, and resolved to keep his secret.

He had been thus fraternizing with Barnes and the Indian Winingo, and believed that he might be able to tell him something about them that would perhaps let in a little light on the mystery surrounding the dead girl, who lay in the adjoining room. Ardyke approached the subject cautiously lest he should excite the fellow's suspicion.

"No, I know the redskin Winingo, is it?" he asked, as he shoved back from the table and wiped off his dripping chin with the sleeve of his woolen shirt. "Well, I should smile. He's the ornariest injun on the river, eap, the very ornariest. There hasn't nothing in dirty mean fur that air redskin to do."

"Is he so?" said Ardyke. "Why, I thought he seemed quite like a white man—"

"I guess you don't know Winny."

"Not very well I admit," said our friend. "He has a friend named Barnes, and I am rightly informed. They go together a lot. Hunting in company I suppose."

"You s'pose mighty wrong then, hossity," remarked Lenhart with a chuckle. "Old man Barnes ain't no hanker. He wouldn't know a rabbit from a woodchuck. If you've seen 'em together it's because the white is hatching some devilry that he want's Winny to stand for, that's what. Old man Dixon Barnes is an upper ten bug, one of them white-livered critters that feels above common folks like me and Winny. He ain't no call to be in the woods 'cept it's as I tell ye, to cut out some devilry fur the redskin."

"Has Mr. Barnes a daughter?"

"You've got me there, cap."

"You do not know?"

"No I don't. That is, cap, I hain't knowed Old Barnes very long anyhow. He has been up to Laketon a few times. That's the most of him was with the red Injun. I spect they're up to some rascality but what it is I don't jest know."

"Perhaps you might find out?" suggested Ardyke.

"Mebby I might."

"Have you know my friend Bennett Wildham?"

"Yes, I know him like a book. Is he yourn's the chum?" A gleam of pleasure expectanity shone on the face of the hunter.

"Yes," said Flint, "we've been in the rough son of the woods knew his friend. "Hunted and fished together more than cabin together. He went away this morning unexpectedly, and I am afraid he has met with some accident. I want to find him."

"It's been a plum year since I have seen Bennett Wildham. I'd like ter see him about a minnit. Wher' is the cuss anyhow?"

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noon hour, the fever subsided and a profuse perspiration took its place. Soon after this the girl was able to take a little nourishment in the shape of a squirrel broth which ARDYE had prepared.

Sitting up in bed, propped by pillows, the girl presented a picture of the most ravishing beauty. She still wore the gown in which she had been entombed, a soft fabric of blue and white that Ardyke quite imagined fit for the garbing of a princess.

"I am glad to see Little Sunshine so much better," ventured he, after she had finished the broth and lay back on the pillow with a sigh of relief.

"Have I been so very sick then?" she asked in a low, sweet voice that completed the conquest of the young lumberman. She seemed in no way surprised at his presence, nor of her own in this forest shanty. Ardyke was considerably puzzled at her matter of fact manner.

"You have been very sick," he said, "but you are much better, and, let us hope will soon be able to return to your home."

She opened her blue eyes a little wider as if in surprise. Then she pushed aside the covering and sat bolt upright.

"It's all nonsense keeping me here like this," she said. "Call my father will you? I am not going to stop here another hour." She would have got up had not Ardyke put out a detaining hand.

"Do not attempt to walk just yet, Miss Barnes," said he quickly. "You are not strong enough. In a time—"

"I tell you I won't be treated as a spoiled child and coddled," cried the girl, her lily cheek flushing crimson. "Papa has treated me very badly, calling me a naughty child, and making me very unhappy by his actions. You are helping him make a fool of me, but I rebel right here, and will show you that I am a woman of spirit." With the words she tossed aside the blankets, planted her feet on the floor and stood quickly upright, her slender form quivering with excitement.

Ardyke got out his arm in time to save the girl from a fall. She leaned weakly against his broad shoulder and she soothed the grieved child. That was the happiest moment of his life, and the young lumberman hugged this delusion as long as he dared without losing his self respect. He was a chivalrous nature, and he felt in duty bound to treat this helpless maid with the kindness and respect due her unprotected condition.

That sweet, blissful minute seemed very short to Ardyke. His pulses leaped in masterful throbs, and he felt raised to the highest pinnacle of earthly happiness, only to find himself so soon dashed ignominously to the ground.

"Let me go, let me go! Oh, I am so weak, much weaker than I imagined," cried she, at length, struggling to free herself from his arms. He eased her gently back to the cot, then withdrew to the end of the room and pretended to busy himself at something on the wall. When he again looked about, the girl lay at full length on the blankets of the low cot, her face hidden in the pillow. How utterly crushed she seemed. At that moment he felt like a double-dyed villain, and scorned himself unmercifully. In thought. He made no effort to speak again, but tiptoed from the room, closing the door softly behind him.

The day was warm and pleasant. Indian summer still holding over the north woods. The birds and squirrels were vieing with one another in rising life outpourings with their music and chatter.

Ardyke felt renewed life and vigor creeping through his veins. All the world was happy and he was the happiest creature in it. He walked down by the river bank and bathed his hot face in the limpid current. He was strong and troubled as he had been on the previous day. That sweet essence of purity, "Little Sunshine," lived, and would ever long, be on condition to reward him as he, egotist that he was, felt that he deserved.

He found his canoe where he had left it, and this, he reasoned, would be the means of conveying himself and "Little Sunshine" down the stream to the nearest settlement. Happy thought. That distance was considerable and he should remain for hours in her company.

The friend of yesterday, whose strange disappearance had so wrought upon him, was now forgotten in this dream of newfound bliss.

In the course of half an hour, the young man found himself back at the threshold of the shanty, a woodman's rude cabin no longer, but the palace of a queen! He entered. The back door stood ajar, and with careful tread he reached the threshold and peered timidly, almost bashfully, within. The room was in semi-gloom and he could not see objects very plainly. It was not necessary. He could wait. He would not intrude on the girl's privacy till she, hearing him moving about in the front room, should either call or come to him.

He busied himself for some time with cleaning up the place. No sound issued from the little back room, and after he had fixed everything that he thought needed retouching, Ardyke again ventured to look in upon his guest. The dead silence induced a fear that his fair charge had relapsed into coma once more. This fear so grew upon him that he forgot his former bashful reserve and burst quickly into the adjoining room.

A considerable surprise awaited him here. The room had no occupant save himself. The fairy presence was not there to lend sunshine to a dismal log-ribbed room, and Ardyke felt that his heart would die. It was not at first very much alarmed. In fact, the girl's absence was, he felt, rather a good omen than otherwises Her strength was such that she had gone into the open air for a sun bath. He doubted not she would soon return. He waited patiently this outcome. His waiting become a length harrowing. His nerves grew to a wire edge once more.

Going outside, he looked about on every side, seeing the crooked oaks and tall, arrowy pines, but finding human nothing beneath.

A sudden fear shot to the heart of the lumberman. He was again plunged in the depths of despair. To find "Little Sunshine" was now the only desire. He stepped back into the shanty and procured his rifle and ammunition. This was a precaution he thought necessary because of his late surprising experiences.

It was not an easy matter to learn whither his beauty bird had flown. He could not blame her after all. No doubt she feared the strange man who had given her his broth that day. He longed to find and make his peace with the modest child

The canoe was still there.

whose misfortunes were as numerous as her unaccountable.

He twice made a circuit of the house ere he was rewarded with signs that led him to hope for success. A dainty footprint in the soft earth at the rear of the cabin, showed him a starting point from which he pushed forward in pursuit. He did not lock his door lest the girl should return, and finding the house closed, become imbued with the idea that she had been deserted by her fate.

Although not without difficulty, Ardyke followed the track made by the feet of the fleeing maiden, and in less than twenty minutes, located her standing close down to the water's edge, clutching a tall reed in a wild grape vine, while she leaned far out over the sullen current. His step aroused and started her. She had bound her rich masses of golden hair in a brilliant knot at the back of her shapely head. Her handsome gown clung about her supple limbs in a manner that was pleasing to an artist's eye.

Ardyke halted in his crouching glide, and standing erect, stood regarding the pretty picture with thrilled senses. When he saw that he was discovered, he started forward with his hat in his hand.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Barnes, but are you not endangering your health by this—this—"

"You, sir!" uttered she with a scared look in her dilating eyes. "Why have you followed me? I wish to get away from here, and—"

"And you shall get away from here," said he as she halted lamely, evidently at a loss for words to express what she felt. "I am your friend, and have no wish but your well-being. Come back to the cabin and let us talk this matter over. You are not strong. If you go away by yourself you may become lost, or what is even worse, fall from lack of strength to proceed, and perish in the woods."

She reeled and swung heavily on her vine support. At length she seemed to regain solid footing and over her face shot a look that he did not like. It was one of distrust and aversion.

"I am your friend, Miss Barnes," he went on when he saw that she was not disposed to speak. "I found you in the woods under very peculiar circumstances. Please not to be offended if I tell you that I like you immensely, and would die if need be to serve you from harm."

He was evidently in earnest. Flint Ardyke was a well looking man, young enough for anything, and yet far enough past his maturity to present a mature and manly bearing that one young lady in particular, thought irresistible. It is enough to say that said young lady was very far from the lumberman's thoughts just now. His eyes had been the first to look upon the matchless beauty of the wildwood. Her face resumed its natural expression of calm serenity and she faintly designed to hold out a forgiving hand.

"You are very kind, sir," she said. "I am so weak I fear to take a step. It seems that I miscalculated my strength. I find that I am wholly at your mercy. Tell me what to do and I shall obey." There was a pitiful little quiver of the lips, a quiver of childish helplessness in the tones that quite captured him.

"You did very wrong to run away from me," he said, as he took her arm and led her up to the higher grounds. "You might have lost your balance and fallen into the water and then you would have drowned. That would have been terrible—"

"Not so very much worse than my life, sir"?

"I imagine that I contributed a good deal to that end."

"Why did you do it? My life is not worth the wasting."

There was a mournful cadence in her voice that caused the young woodsman's own spirits. He led her unresistingly along till they were at the shanty once more. She leaned against the door of the cabin and gazed anywhere but at her companion. Her cheeks were flushed and there was an unhealthy sparkle in the beautiful eyes.

"You did a foolish thing," said she, "I do not care to live after what I have passed through."

"But your father—your mother?"

"He would not care—my mother long since passed to a better world. I never saw her to know her."

Ardyke, that your father seemed very much worked up over your supposed death. He—

"What is that you say?" cried the listless girl, starting into new life. "My supposed death? How is that? I know I was ill, and that an Indian, a big chief they called him, was called to prescribe, but I did not know that it was for that death's door of mine. How did, how could you, a stranger, effect my safety"?

"I can explain," said he, "but we can talk much better inside the house. The air out here is growing chilly. Won't you trust me, Miss Barnes?" His voice was low and pleading. She evinced sufficient trust to smile faintly and moved toward the door which his ready hand had flung open.

He gallantly placed the only chair for her use and drew up a low stool for himself at hand. She sat down and rested her elbow on the mottled cloth of the pine table, the palm of her hand pressed to her cheek.

"I am ready now to listen," she said coldly.

"But," he remonstrated, "tell me of yourself first. You are the daughter of Silas trader, Dixon Barnes, farther than that I do not know."

"Perhaps it would be better that you never do know any more," she said, with an uneasy sigh.

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THE WIND CITY MYSTERY;

or, Man, Beast or Devil.

By J. BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS.

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CHAPTER X.

When the detective heard the trap-door raised he hastily assumed a horizontal position on the flooring, and lay with suspended breath.

The light of the dark-lantern from the room above, revealed about the cellar.

In spite of his fear of being discovered, Keeneyes took advantage of the light to become better acquainted with his surroundings.

The light fell upon a surface of black water—that in which he had been struggling a short time before.

It revealed heavy stone walls about him. One side of the cellar seemed missing. In that direction the light was lost itself in cold watery space.

The light fell upon the flooring which had given him protection. It proved to be detached from the wall, and, in fact, a long raft. It was fastened to the foot of a perpendicular ladder which ascended to the trap-door.

In his fall Keeneyes had narrowly grazed crashing down upon the raft. Once in the water, he had unconsciously circles about it, and he had climbed upon its further edge, where upon him the ladder was a long, tall box. By a happy chance, he lay just behind it. And Nelse, who was still upon the raft, but it could not betray him, because the box afforded a big protection to form and the watchers on floor above.

Somebody called sharply, "Mugs!"

There was no answer.

Then another voice: "It wasn't anything. I tell you, it was a rat, or a bird."

The first voice rejoined, "But I know I heard something. Somebody's below. I suppose you climb down on the raft, and flash this light down the water."

"I ain't goin' to waste time with no such foolishness," retorted another. "If Mugs was there, he'd answer, and if it was anybody else, we'd see him."

"Maybe something's be behind that box," came the voice of George Teets.

"Yes," said the former voice, "go on down, Davis, and look behind the box."

"I am not here to be ferrittin' out waterrats," returned Davis sullenly. "You can shut the door, Nelse, and let's get busy!"

There was a pause. The light danced about the raft.

"And blow out that light," added George Teets, "before you follow detective come to town."

"I am afraid, uncle," came a girl's timid tones.

The light vanished from the cellar.

The trap-door closed with a muffled sound.

Silence and darkness again reigned beneath the cottage where Keeneyes, the old bachelor.

Keeneyes waited breathlessly, but all remained tranquil.

Presently he rose.

He was relieved from his dripping garments, but excitement had kept him warm, until now. The thing of course, was to examine the box. He cautiously felt the edge and discovered the key hanging in the padlock. "Curious," murmured Keeneyes. "Such carelessness!"

He turned the lock and lifted the top of the tall box. He raised it but an inch or so, for Keeneyes was a cautious person. He closed the box much more quickly than he had lifted it, and when it was closed he hastened to put the key in the padlock.

He had heard a queer sound emanate from the box. He now placed himself against the side and detected soft movements. He ran his fingers along the box and found a large opening in the door which wire gauze was tacked.

"I am inexcusable," murmured the detective, "for opening that box before looking for ammunition."

In truth, the detective had been carried beyond his ordinary prudence by his natural discomfort. He longed to find dry clothing in the box.

But he had not for a moment suspected the presence of living creatures. What could they be? Nothing, surely, unless the living beings uttered some vocal sound, there was but one means of finding out. That means was to thrust his hand into the box and take chances. Keeneyes did not care to take such chances.

He drew his match-box from his pocket and was disgusted to find that it contained more water than matches.

He again pressed his ear to the side of the box and listened, but could hear nothing on the boards to arouse the inmates.

The soft sounds of cautious movement were again heard. "There is more than one of them," the detective concluded.

The box was ample enough to contain a dozen children of ten or twelve; but if children, they would assuredly cry out.

The sounds he heard, suggested the slipping of snakes over each other, but the suggestion might be dismissed as the gruesome darkness of the place, and the cold creeping sensation which he himself was suffering from.

Accordingly, Keeneyes crept around the long box, intending to go directly to the ladder, he crawled about the plank flooring of the raft, and felt for the ladder. A sudden thought had occurred to him.

Just before his hurried descent from the room above, he had, on being alarmed by the coming of George Teets and others, dropped the match which he was on the eve of lighting. The match must have fallen toward the raft, since he had fallen in the other direction.

It was barely possible that he might find the match lying upon the raft.

If so, the match must be dry, and ready for use.

It was as the detective hoped.

He had not proceeded far before he found the match.

With a thrill of triumph, he crept back to the long box, and thumped upon it, in order to arouse whatever might be within.

Then he locked up himself near the trap-door, and struck the match.

He took advantage of its first faint flickering to learn better the lay of the land. The cave-in proved was in the form of an oblong. Three stone walls, the original walls of the cellar, were rather together.

The fourth wall was so far distant, that the light of the match served it but a moment. The water completely hid all the floor. The raft was the only means of securing a dry place of refuge.

When the blaze of the watch was bright and steady, Keeneyes held it close to the wire-gauze that protected the opening in the top of the box.

What he saw so startled him that the match almost dropped from his fingers.

He stood with suspended breath.

Closely pressed against the wire screen was an inner network of iron bars. Through these interstices, as if a face glued itself at Keeneyes with large, ferocious, red eyes—a face malignant and horrible. Two protruding lips and a fringe of coarse black hair. From the mouth of the face came the sharp thrill as of a frog, and there was a jostling which caused the horrible face of the legendary beast to vanish from the screen. Other faces took its place; they were smaller, but no less savage.

Keeneyes' match went out.

"I understand," he murmured presently, as if to throw a reproach upon himself.

The young detective had now learned all that the attaches of the hotel knew. He cast the charred match over the side of the raft, and wrapped himself in the blanket. He slowly climbed to the top, and pressed his ear against the edge of the trap-door.

There came to him the sounds of coarse voices. Occasionally the high tones of the girl reached the room. The trap-door had been placed over the trap-door. Some one lay upon the door, and was sitting on his elbows just at the leathern strap of the trap-door. Keeneyes heard him say:

"What's that you say, Teets?"

The girl replied to this, but not one word of the sound of her voice reached.

The man spoke again, more impatiently: "You want to get a home and be independent, and then you have chance, and you don't. We don't ask nothin' of you, nohow, but just to wipe out the fact that you ever was there." The speaker was the man addressed as "Davis."

A rumble of men's voices followed his words, then the girl spoke, then Davis replied: "Well, then, I'll tell you. It makes it all the more confusin' to 'em. But there oughtn't to be no trouble at all. It's for us to know everything, or lose our jobs. We can't have no competition in mysteries. Look here, Teets, if you want to get rich for anything, you'd never stand it one night! Anybody can have it, maybe you'd get a finger in it, yoreself."

To this Teets made no angry reply.

"Well, may be not," Davis replied, "maybe not. But it looks as if you and my niece was playin' into each other's hands!"

The girl answered tartly.

"All right," said Davis, in a tone that was half convinced. "All I got to say is, if you two, or if anny one of you, tries to play a deal that we haven't got in on, we'll be a mighty swift reckonin, hey Nelse?"

Nelson Docket's reply was inaudible.

There came the voice of George Teets in angry remonstrance.

It was provoking to Keeneyes that he could hear but one interlocutor of all the five.

"There's this to be said," Davis continued, "if you don't, if yoreself, George Teets, somebody is, and why don't you get on to 'em? What air you made of? Is it pottery?"

George again answered angrily, presumably disclaiming any such composition.

The girl spoke at some length.

"Oh, shut up, Fancy!" said Davis at last. "Tore aunt alers said you hadn't no sense, sincerely, and I reckon she ain't fur wrong. If you have got any idee in your brain, spit, bring it to beat!"

Fancy Docket and George Teets now spoke both at the same time, apparently on the defensive. They were followed by some of the other men. Again the voice of Nelson Davis spoke:

"We've got a new detective just come to town. His name is Keeneyes, but if there's any edge on him, take it off tongue! He's to sit guard at old man Weiler's house. He ought to find out something. I reckon he's at work right now. And yet nothing would do you two, but you must leave him there to his own devices and come streakin' off here to the mestin' that could do mighty well enough without any one of you! How do you know what he'll find out tonight? He won't tell you what he finds out. He'll befog you more than you are naturally befogged by nature". Now if he could only know that the full mystery of Wind City is shut up in that box, down below, and that we air fraidin' river-fashion with points beyond, and that old man Weiler's troubles—"

There came at this point a most unseasonable interruption. It had appeared to Keeneyes that he was on the eve of learning a most important piece of evidence. So necessary had it appeared to him to catch every word now being spoken by Fancy Davis's uncle, that he failed to take into account the effect of the current of air through the crack of the trap-door. It is true that the door was closed, and secured by the carpet. Still, Keeneyes' nose was too near the crack to be unaffected by the current.

The young detective sneezed!

The sneeze was long and violent, in proportion to its unexpectedness. Keeneyes was overmastered by a perfect paroxysm of sneezing that made concealment entirely out of the question. The trap-door was flung violently open, and the detective, still sneezing, scrambled into the midst of the band.

CHAPTER XI.

Keeneyes was assailed by horrible oaths.

A fierce hand gripped his collar.

"Who is there?" cried the savage voice of Davis.

"Let me to him!" snarled Teets.

For a moment Keeneyes did not reply. He was too bewildered by the suddeness of his unfortunate mistake to be imagined with his nose, to master the situation.

"This is the hatter-eye I scalped!" growled Nelson Docket. "Somebody strike a light."

The girl, Fancy Davis, screamed faintly.

"What's Mugs?" Keeneyes at last exclaimed. "Don't you strike no light. I tell you not to! I am Mugs. Don't you hear me say so?"

"By gunpert" exclaimed Davis. "What air you doin' here in the cellar?"

As Keeneyes knew nothing of "Mugs" except that a person answering to that name belonged to the band, it was impossible to be in Kansas City, he shook himself muttering hurriedly, "I'm looking for Mugs."

Keeneyes took all advantage of his wet condition. The rasping hoarseness of his voice defied detection.

"Here!" said George Teets angrily, "you stand further away! You're getting me all wet!"

"Say, fellers," said Keeneyes, "I found out in K. C. that a new detective named Keeneyes—"

"Oh, we know all about him," interposed Nelson Docket. "What did you come back for?"

"I came to warn you. Say! he's the smartest detective in the United States, or either. Say! he's spyin' on this cottage at this very minute!"

"No he ain't," interposed George Teets. "He came here this afternoon, and saw all there was to see. He's now at the village guard at the old man's house."

"I tell you," said Keeneyes, "he is right outside at this blessed minute. He isn't at old man Weiler's! Go there and see for yourself. As sure as God's in the sky he's layin' for the whole of you. That's why I came here. I wanted to warn you. Mugs ain't layin', I tell you!"

"Well, he won't hatch nothing," remarked Docket, grimly. "Let's all of us smook down into the cellar, and get away."

"Come on," said Keeneyes. "I'm with you!"

"We got to go home," Fancy Davis objected.

"You oughtn't never to of left it!" growled Davis.

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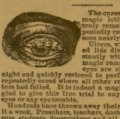

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"See here, Nelse," said George Teets, "you can't go, for you're supposed to be sleeping here tonight."

"I don't going to sleep here and have no detective running me down, just to keep up people's suppusings," remarked Docket.

"Come on down the ladder!"

"Boy, Muzs," said Davis, "now did the stuff sell?"

"This ain't no time," said Keeneyes, hastily, "to go into tabulated reports. Who goes first?"

"Me," said Docket.

"I won't go down there," said Fancy Davis, her voice frightened but determined. "I've been down in that place, and I won't begin now."

"Then go an' get ketched!" growled her uncle.

"You will go with us, I tell you," snarled George Teets. "I'm not going to have you left here, to give us away to others."

"Oh, George!" said the girl with tearful reproach, "how can you say I'd ever give you away? I'd die before I'd get you into trouble, and you know it. Is that the way you trust me?"

"I don't trust anybody," said Teets, sullenly.

"Look a-here, Gorge Teets," said Davis, "you can trust me to punch yore head if I even give my many more talk like that, now you mark my word! She's a poor, shiftless creature, but she's as good as you are, every bit, and I'll not have a hand by her, if she is your own wife!"

"Shut up!" ordered George Teets violently. "What's the use of telling the whole world?"

"I'm down, called a voice from below. "Hurry, up! Must I light the lantern?"

"Yes," said Docket in a rough whisper. "And get the poles ready."

"Down, girl," whispered George Teets. "Come on Fancy, that's a good girl."

"No, sir!" replied the girl, "I can't, I can't; I'm afraid!"

At that moment all were startled by a violent shock at one of the windows. Glass jingled upon the floor, and the fall of a heavy object sounded from the yard.

Instantly the ladder grew hot with swift descent of the men. "I told you!" called Keeneyes hoarsely. "I told you he was outside! I told you so."

One by one with the ease and celerity of long practice, the men vanished from the room.

"Are you down, Mugs?" said Davis at last.

Keeneyes who had withdrawn to another part of the room, did not reply.

"Are you, Fancy?" demanded her uncle.

"No," sobbed the girl.

"They betray us at your peril!" growled Davis. He carefully closed the trap-door after him.

For a long time there was silence in the room.

Then the girl, still sobbing, felt her way from the cottage, little suspecting that the detective was near at hand.

When she was gone, Keeneyes slipped around to the window that had been smashed.

He felt in the long weeds, and soon found the heavy poker which had caused so much alarm.

Keeneyes flung it back into the room. It was he who had scared away the conspirators. At the moment came at which the lantern was to be lit, he had dashed the poker through the glass, to avert discovery. On the whole, he was pleased with the part he had taken in this little drama.

It was now about half-past nine. He must go to town, and secure dry clothes. Then he would go to the house of old Mr. Weller.

He would, no doubt, find Emily keeping guard in the hall.

He would take her place, and await developments.

CHAPTER XII.

It was nearly ten o'clock when Keeneyes, dryly clad, approached the residence of old Mr. Weller. The house was still. No lights showed at any of the windows.

The young detective cautiously drew near the front door which led into the hall. As the night had now fairly begun, it was reasonable to infer that Emily Weller sat in the hall, keeping watch for the mysterious burglars.

"Let us suppose that I am one of those burglars," Keeneyes softly whispered to himself, "and let us set now quickly, in that case, I would be discovered."

When at last before the door, he gave another careful scrutiny of the yard. He was alone. He gently drew forth his little bag of burglar tools, and put his hand upon the doorknob.

He turned the knob.

Keeneyes replaced the bag of tools in his pocket. He had no need for them. The door was not locked.

"Brave girl!" the detective whispered. She leaves the door unlocked that the robbers may meet with no obstacle! How eager she is for them to come, that she may give them over to justice!"

Keeneyes threw open the door and swiftly crossed the yard. The night was dark, but the sky was unclouded.

He passed under a cedar tree, the branches of which came close to the ground. In this retreat he waited patiently.

An hour passed.

Then Keeneyes detected the sound of some one stumbling upon the walk outside the yard. The sudden noise was succeeded by absolute silence. Presently he saw a dark form stealing into the yard. It crept up behind a cedar tree not far from the one of which he had taken possession. Here the form stopped. It was evidently intent upon discoveries on its own account. Perhaps another hour passed. Occasionally Keeneyes heard the other watcher move impatiently, or change his position for one of greater ease. From the house nothing was to be heard.

The spy was a real inconvenience to the young detective. It did not suit him to be reduced to a state of passive endurance. Yet if he moved, his presence would be betrayed.

At last Keeneyes decided that in order to accomplish his plan of that night, it would be necessary to rush upon the spy and secure him.

He was about to put this purpose to the proof when the form came from behind the cedar tree and moved toward the house. It went around the corner and all was still again.

"It must have been George Teets," Keeneyes said to himself, "as has been waiting to learn if I am to out burglary, or perhaps he is expecting the burglars."

Keeneyes hurried to the house, and when the door was reached, softly opened it and stepped into the hall.

In the niche under the staircase, a lamp was burning. It was heavily shaded, that its light might not show from the outside, and window over the staircase. Beside the lamp was an empty chair. The hall was deserted.

Keeneyes slipped to the empty chair and sat down. As he listening carefully he could hear a faint, faraway sound from upstairs. He believed it to be George Teets, in his bedroom.

The hall in which the detective was waiting had three doors, three were opposite each other, opening into the front rooms. The other was in the rear. Opposite the staircase was a large square opening, over which heavy curtains hung.

As Keeneyes sat in the niche under the staircase, he saw these curtains move. Then a girl entered the hall. It was Emily Weller. She held her hands over her face. She was sobbing violently, and trying to stifle the sounds of grief in her hands.

She sank upon the floor and trembled, still hiding her face.

The curtains moved again and Frances Teets came into the hall. To her delighted eyes Keeneyes looked her full in the face, but Frances was too excited to observe his presence. He thought her very beautiful as she walked up to the sitting form of Emily; but when she spoke, he felt a sudden repugnance.

"Get up from there!" said Frances in a low but vicious voice.

Emily looked up.

"I want that," said Frances, touching a little gold locket that hung upon Emily's bosom. "Give it to me!"

"It was my mother's," said Emily faintly.

"What do I care whose it was?" sneered Frances. "Give it to me!"

"I never will!" Emily exclaimed fiercely.

"You and your John Grenn!" mocked the other. "You and your Johnny Green! Oh, pieces! So you won't give me that locket!" Frances suddenly leaned forward and plunged her hand upon the chain.

Emily's face burned scarlet.

"Give it to me, you wicked hypocrite!" said Frances.

Emily handed her the locket.

"Frances smiled. "I have no right to such trinkets," she said: "you are not good enough to look at them, why should you have lockets while I have none? You and your John Green! Oh, he, Miss Prim!"

Frances swept her arm across the counter and wheeling about, vanished behind the curtains. Emily sank upon the floor, and buried her face in her arms.

Keeneyes could hardly believe his good luck. Although partly protected by the staircase, either of the girls might have seen him at any time during their colloquy. He would like to escape. He looked wildly about him.

Emily sat in his path toward the front of the hall. It was possible that by exerting the utmost caution, he might steal from his niche without disturbing Emily, who was sobbing again.

But if he did so, there was only one means of exit left for the young detective.

It seemed hazardous to follow in the footsteps of the vindictive step-daughter of old Mr. Weller.

However, it was the hazards of his business that delighted Keeneyes.

He slipped from the chair beside the lamp, and crept across the hall behind Emily.

He reached the curtains, and parting them, entered the unknown room. Once behind the curtains he stopped to listen. It was intensely dark, and perfectly still. He felt his way cautiously forward. By a curious chance, he encountered no furniture on the way. He kept going, wondering all the time what kind of room he was in, when he was going about in a circle. At any rate, he did not find such as a chair in his path.

At last he came to a door. He hesitated. If old man Weller had shown him up to his own room, he might have made some pretense of going to bed for the night. But he did not know in what part of the house his room had been selected. Should he go on?

He pressed his lips grimly together. He resolved to keep on in whatever way until stopped. He tried the door. It opened easily. He entered. As silently as he had so proceeded, he preserved the utmost caution.

He had taken but a few steps in the room, when he heard breathing near at hand. He stopped abruptly.

Suddenly he was startled by the striking of a match. He stopped as if turned to a statue.

The match was held in the delicate hand of Frances Teets. She sat in a low rocking chair, with her head close to the light. Her hair streamed loosely down her back. In her lap she held a locket. She had struck the match to take another look at it. Keeneyes heard her sigh heavily. The apartment was her bedroom. Evidently she had risen from bed to go for the locket, and was now gazing at it great over it, before returning to bed.

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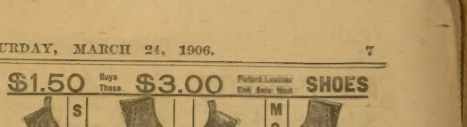

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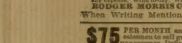

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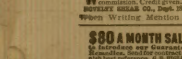

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The Missing Ingredient.

"There ought to be a good deal of money in 'pork' sausages like this," grumbled the regular patron, scowling at the mess on his plate.

"No, sir," responded the waiter, with a cheery, open faced smile; "but I guess it's got about everything else in it."

The Best Way.

Parke—I wish I knew what kind of a suit to get.

Lane—Why don't you do as I do—take home a lot of samples to your wife?

Parke—And what then?

Lane—Go and order something entirely different from any of them.

"Shan't I play Indian with you, Fritz?"

"No, grandpa, you wouldn't do at all. You've been scalped already!"

The Usual Way.

"That young man who has so much to say about things is one of the partners in the concern, ain't he?" said a visitor at a wholesale establishment. "No, he is one of the cler-ks."

"And who is that quiet-looking old man who seems to be so much afraid of giving any trouble?"

"He owns the business."

What They Have.

The Traveler—In China the statesmen have yellow jackets.

The Politician—That's nothing. In this country they have presidential bees.

Wonders Never Cease.

First London Belle—Oh, have you heard the news? I never would have believed it, but it's true. All sorts of wonderful things are occurring nowadays.

Second London Belle—Dear me! What has happened?

"An English duke, who spent three weeks in America has returned, and married an English girl.

Friends Worth Having.

Hyler—I put a friend who was in hard luck on his feet last week.

Smiley—That's nothing. I put a friend on his feet seven times last night.

IN THE LUNCHROOM.

She—You ordered fried liver long before that man over there and he's being served first.

He—His liver's out of order. I'll see the proprietor.

She Knew Different.

Miss Singleton—This paper says that it is impossible for a man to kick with full force when there is nothing to kick at.

Mrs. Weddeiry—That may be true of bachelors, but all married men are forceful kickers—and they usually kick at nothing.

His Identity Established.

Wicks—I saw some verses in the paper today by Peter Pettikin.

Hicks—Yes, he's a friend of mine.

Wicks—So you told me. By the way, "Peter Pettikin" is a pseudonym, of course?

Hicks—No, indeed; he's a Democrat.

Out of the Mouth's of Babes.

"Just think, children," said the Sunday school teacher, "all this happened more than 3,000 years ago!"

"Cee," exclaimed a small boy in an audible whisper, "but she's got a good memory!"

Mrs. Blackstone—Harry, I've asked you three times if you knew who had been in the jam closet. Why don't you answer?

Small Harry—'Cause papa says no man is bound to give testimony that is calculated to incriminate himself.

One day 4-year-old Fred climbed upon a parlor chair to reach something he wanted. "You must not get on that chair with your feet, dear," said his mother.

Fred looked down at his feet, evidently puzzled. "Why, mamma," he said, "I can't take 'em off."

She Survived It.

Miss Louisa M. Alcott was once visiting at a small town in Connecticut, in which, only a few days before, an exceedingly small child had been born. In the course of conversation, the child was spoken of, and Miss Alcott laughingly said:

"I have heard that I was a very small infant. In fact, tradition says that I could be put into a quart tankard, and the cover replaced."

One old lady, who had been listening attentively, then, asked sympathetically: "And did you live?"

Couldn't Catch Him.

Farmer Poddershucks—Yes, sir'ee, them Washin'ton politicians tried ter bunker me, but I was too smart for 'em.

Mrs. Poddershucks—Land sakes! What happened?

Farmer Poddershucks—Well, when I got to Washin'ton, I went to a hut-tel. An' a slick-lookin' feller—senator, probly—shoved a big book in front o' me, an' said, "Register, pease." "Not much,' says I. 'I registered t' home last fall. Want ter git me run in fer repeatin', don't yer?"

No Use.

House Agent—Yes, sir. I've got the very thing that will suit you—beautiful house and fine situation.

Client—Fine situation, eh?

House Agent—Splendid situation, sir. "Healthy place?"

"Healthy! I should say so. Why, sir, in that district sickness is practically unknown."

"Ah, well, then, the house won't suit me. You see, I'm a medical man."

A Matter of Accuracy

"Mamma," said the little boy, "we know that the bible says, 'seventy-seven.'"

"Yes, dear," replied the mother.

"And we know that the dictionary is so, don't we?"

"To be sure, child."

"Then mamma, what's the—"

"Well, pet?"

"Which is the so-est?"

Difference in Gender.

The Frenchman did not know all about the English language. He would like to come to see you ver' much; in fact, I would come only I thought you were ver' busy. I do not like to cockroach upon your time."

"Not 'cockroach,' that is not right. You should say 'encroach, encroach'."

"Ahs, that is it, 'hencroach, hencroach.' I see I got de gender of de verb wrong."

Other Side of It.

"Why, young man," said the stern parent, "you certainly don't think I would be foolish enough to let a penniless youth like you marry my daughter, do you?"

"Well, it's up to you," rejoined the poor but merry youngster. "It's a cinch that no rich young man would marry a girl as homely as she is."

How It Happened.

Giles—How did you acquire that black eye, old man? Automobile accident?

Smiles—No, I fell off the water wagon night before last.

An Insinuation.

Her—I suppose you have met pretty women in great numbers?

Him—Yes, indeed. I was a shoe clerk for several years.

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Getting at the Facts.

Attorney—Are you a single man?
Witness—No, sir.
Attorney—Is your wife living?
Witness—I've never been married.
Attorney—But you just said you were not single.
Witness—True. I'm one of twins. See?

Facts in the Case.

"According to the papers," said the alleged funny man, "an Ohio sheriff eloped with a locomotive last week."
"Was it a love match?" asked his friend.
"Probably not," replied the party of the funny part, "although there seems to have been a tender attachment."

Cholly—How did you ever come to meet Jack?
Polly—Well, we both happened to be skating on a pond when the ice cracked and—
Cholly—Oh, that's how you fell in together!

Indication.

Mrs. Neighbors—The Homers evidently contemplate the purchase of an automobile.
Neighbors—Why do you think so?
Mrs. Neighbors—A canvasser was along today taking orders for a book entitled "First Aid to the Injured," and Mrs. Homer subscribed for a copy.

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Hippo—Naw! I don't want any of your "Monkey Shines."

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He—Will you be my wife?
She—Pardon me, but how many clubs do you belong to?
He—I belong to six, but—
She—Then I'll take a chance. You'll probably be away from home so much that it won't inconvenience me.

What He Does.

"That's old Gruffer over there—made ten millions in potted meats, you know, browbeat his way into society and doesn't give elbow room to any one."
"Never stands on ceremony, then?"
"Stands on it? I should say not. He usually jumps on it with both feet."

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Or, The Love of His Friend's Wife.

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CHAPTER XII.

Upon leaving Gray Hall, I went direct to the jail. The major appeared rather more cheerful than on my previous visit and I told him so.

"Yes, I was rather down," he replied. "But, after all, there is really no reason for apprehension in my part. It's very pleasant to be under arrest on suspicion. They are bound to set me free after this preliminary examination."

"I wouldn't be too sure of that," I remarked, dubiously.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed. "It will be an infernal piece of injustice if I am not released after they have heard Randal Cranston's evidence."

"See here, Le Clare," I said, "don't count on that. Randal Cranston called on me last evening and came to warn you against having him summoned. He declares that his evidence, instead of helping, may ruin you."

Major Le Clare was staring at me with what appeared to be a mixture of astonishment, bewilderment and anger.

"What the deuce do you mean by such an assertion as that?" he cried.

"He claims that you went into the library at Gray Hall, he found Arthur Lester dead, murdered," I explained, quietly.

The major turned pale.

"It's a damned lie!" he cried, furiously. "And if he dares to say so on the witness stand as that I will accuse him of having murdered Arthur Lester himself!"

"But that would be absurd," I said, with a smile.

"There's nothing absurd about it," he retorted. "Randal Cranston had more reason to murder Arthur Lester than I have under any circumstances."

"What reason, pray?" I asked. "Arthur Lester was his dearest friend."

The major sneered.

"Was he, indeed!" he exclaimed. "It's a queer sort of friendship when a man steals the love of his friend's wife."

"Do you know what you are saying?" I asked. "You appear to be excited—"

"I know enough to say what I am saying," he interrupted me impatiently. "See here, Dexter, I did intend to keep my daughter's name out of this business. That is why I refused to say what led to the quarrel between Arthur Lester and myself. But self-preservation is the first law of nature and I have got to look out for myself. I suspected from the first that Randal Cranston murdered Lester and was convinced of it. But he can't fasten his own guilt on my shoulders. No, by Jove, he shan't, the fiend on him. He lies when he asserts he found Lester dead, but I haven't much doubt but that he left him dead."

"It's all well enough for you to make these assertions, Major Le Clare," I said, "But the question is—have you anything to bring forward to substantiate them?"

"I know that my daughter and Lester were in love with each other."

"How do you know that, if don't suppose that either of them made a confidant of you."

"Not exactly, but I happened to overhear a conversation between them which left no room for doubt as to their feelings for each other. They were in a summer house in the grounds at Cranston Manor and I was on my way to the house. I stopped and listened. I knew that I would have done so if the woman hadn't been my own daughter."

I had to admit that, but did not say so.

"Did you know at the time who Lester was?" I asked.

"No, I had never seen Lester, though I had heard Cranston mention him several times before he married my daughter. I made some inquiries afterward and found out who Lester was."

"Did you tell your daughter what you had overheard?"

"No, I did not, but that was what took me to Gray Hall. She saw that my suspicion was guiltless of any actual wrong against her husband and I wrote her a letter warning him to keep away from her. You know what followed."

"Well, I think Lester was the one who should have come in for the horse-whipping," I suggested.

Le Clare moved uneasily.

"You see he repented by saying anything to him about the matter," he explained rather lamely.

"He certainly acted very indiscreetly in making a noise about the affair. He must have been beside himself with rage."

"He was. In fact, it struck me that he had been drinking rather too much wine at the dinner and was not quite responsible."

"Indeed! I never heard it said that Lester was a drunkard before."

The major shrugged his shoulders.

"I am positive that he had been drinking that night."

"Well, we'll let that pass. Am I to understand that you intend to accuse Randal Cranston of having murdered Lester?"

"If it is necessary in order to protect myself, I certainly shall," replied Le Clare, doggedly. "I would be a fool not to."

"You mean that you will do so if Cranston testifies that he found Lester dead?"

"Yes, you see, I shall have no difficulty in showing that Cranston had more cause for murdering Lester than I."

It sat reflecting. If all that Le Clare asserted were true, appearances were certainly against Randal Cranston. If Cranston had not seen Major Le Clare, as he claimed, in the grounds at Gray Hall, then he must have been oddly abstracted or laboring under strong excitement at the time. Then the secrecy he had maintained regarding his visit to Gray Hall, and, now, his assertion, after he knew that he had been seen, that he found Lester murdered. It certainly seemed strange that, if he did find Lester murdered, he should fail to give the alarm.

I felt that if Le Clare were cleared, I would have ample grounds upon which to arrest Randal Cranston provided I could establish the fact that in favor of the attachment between his wife and the murdered man. Did young Mrs. Cranston sustain her husband of having murdered Lester and was it that which had stricken her down?

"Well," said Le Clare, growing impatient at my long silence, "don't you agree with me that I am entirely justified in accusing Randal Cranston?"

"You forget that we do not even know if Cranston was aware that his wife and Lester were in love with each other," I suggested.

"Nonsense! of course he knows it," declared the major, with conviction. "Why, man, look at his face! His face shows it. His face betrays his guilt. Grief for the death of a friend would never bring that look to a man's face. You can depend upon that."

I was inclined to be of that opinion myself, but I didn't say so.

"Randal Cranston was very much in love with his wife, was he not?" I asked, as I arose to depart.

"He was deeply in love with her."

"And she was passionately fond of him?"

"Yes, in a way. But she was very young and I don't suppose she knew her own heart."

"That is not very much older now," I remarked.

"Oh, a year of married life is very devolping in a woman," said the major, with that, if she's not in love with her husband she'll be before long with some other man one of these days. You'll tell Randal Cranston what my instructions are if he attempts to fasten the guilt of the murder on me?" he added, as I turned to depart.

"I shall tell Mr. Randal Cranston how," I replied, as I went out.

I took a car on arriving to Cranston Manor and inquiring for Mr. Cranston. The servant had evidently been instructed to admit me at once, for I was called and I was shown into the library. A trained nurse was standing on the stairs as I passed along the hall. I inquired of the servant how Mrs. Cranston was.

"She's very ill indeed, sir," was the reply, as he turned and went away to find his master.

Randal Cranston was not long in joining me and as I glanced at him I thought of what Le Clare had said. Randal Cranston's face resembled the face of a man stricken by despair.

"Mr. Cranston," I began, "after you left me last evening I went to the office of the sheriff's office and asked to see a list of the witnesses summoned for the preliminary examination. Your name was among them, and the summons will be served upon you tomorrow."

"There was no mistaking the look of surprise on his face.

"Have you told Le Clare all that I said?" he asked.

"I have."

"Then the man must be mad. What did he say?"

"He became very angry and excited and declared that you murdered the man you murder and of trying to place the guilt upon him."

Randal Cranston shrank and quivered under my words as though they had been a blow. His face was ghastly.

"Me! accuse me!" he faltered. "Upon what grounds?"

He tried to recover his self-control, but it was a pitiful failure.

It was evident to me that the man had lost his nerve. Detectives cannot afford to indulge their sympathies, so pity, but, for the moment, I did pity the stricken man before me.

"He claims that there was an attachment existing between your wife and Lester," I began, but he broke in fiercely.

"How—how did he know this?" he asked, tremulously.

I repeated to him briefly what Le Clare had told me. A mingled look of agony and hatred passed over his face as I spoke of the interview in the summer house. I could see that every word I spoke was torture unspeakable to him. When I had finished speaking, he lifted his head, looked at me and said, quietly:

"Arthur deserved death at my hands and I went that night to Gray Hall to kill him. But when I entered the library, I found him murdered. I believe that he was murdered by Le Clare."

CHAPTER XIII.

Two days later, Agatha Lester was kneeling beside the death-bed of her child. Little Arty had been taken suddenly with membranous croup, had grown rapidly very ill and now all hope of saving him had been abandoned. The little life was ebbing fast and the mother knelt motionless beside the small bed, her face white, rigid, awful in its despair.

The child's nurse, kneeling upon the other

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side of the bed, sobbed and wept, but no sound came from the white, locked lips of the mother. Her eyes, wide and strained, were fixed upon the face of the dying boy. Doctor Lorton and the minister, Mr. Auburn, who had been present when Mark Lester died and had married Agatha to Arthur Lester, stood at a little distance from the bed. They had both endeavored to induce Agatha to leave the room, for the death struggles of the child, who was choking to death, were most terrible to witness, but she refused. She knelt with the little convulsed form in her arms, never removing her eyes from the face distorted out of all its fair childish beauty.

That death struggle did not last very long, however. Soon it was all over and the little form was still and death gave back to the baby features their lost beauty But Agatha still knelt clasping the body in her arms, looking down upon the dead face

The physician moved forward and laid his hand gently upon her shoulder.

"Agatha, my poor child, it is all over," he said.

She shivered a little, then laid the child gently back upon the pillow and arose to her feet.

The minister came forward as though to speak some words of consolation, but she lifted her hand with a gesture that stayed the words upon his lips.

"It is useless," she said, and her voice sounded strangely in the still chamber of death. "I know all that you would say, but your words would seem like the veriest mockery to me. The black shadow of despair lies heavily upon my life and can never be lifted again so long as I may live."

"You think so now," the minister answered, gently. "But time——"

"Time can bring me no alleviation," she interrupted him, wearily. "The wrath of God has descended upon me. He has punished me by taking my child."

The minister glanced with an apprehensive look from Agatha to the physician. He was beginning to fear that sorrow had affected her brain. That the tragic death of her husband and, now, that of the child had driven her mad.

"Come, Agatha," said the physician, "let me take you to your room. You must lie down and I will give you something to quiet your nerves."

She shook her head.

"No, no, I could not rest. There is something I must say, a confession I must make. But not here where my dead child lies. I want you, doctor, and you Mr. Auburn, to come with me to the library."

She turned, led the way from the room and they followed her.

"Is there anything wrong with her brain?" the minister asked in a low voice, of the physician, as they descended the stairs.

Doctor Lorton shook his head.

"I can see no evidence of it," he replied.

"But how do you account for her wild talk?"

"I can't account for it, but we are to be enlightened as to its meaning," he replied, as they followed Agatha into the library.

They seated themselves in silence and then Agatha spoke:

"There is but one thing left for me to do," she began, "and that is to prevent an innocent person from suffering for my crime. I killed my husband, Arthur Lester."

"My dear Agatha," exclaimed the minister, soothingly, for he was quite convinced that her mind was unhinged, "you are laboring under some extraordinary delusion. Really, doctor," turning almost sternly to the physician, "you should not allow this. She does not know what she is saying."

"I think she does know perfectly well what she is saying," Doctor Lorton, whose face had grown unusually grave, replied.

The minister paled with unspeakable horror.

"But this—this terrible assertion cannot be true," he murmured.

"It is true," said Agatha, quietly. "I am not mad, Mr. Auburn; I know perfectly well what I am saying. I murdered my husband. I killed him because I could better bear to have him dead, than living and loving, as he did, another woman. I came into this room that night and shot him as he lay upon that couch asleep." She paused a moment while the two men, who had known her all her life, sat gazing at her with infinite horror. The minister, in a dazed sort of a way, was thinking of the day he had married her to Arthur Lester at her father's death-bed. Could that young, childish creature and this woman, who with stony calmness had just confessed herself guilty of an awful crime, be one and the same? The doctor's thoughts had gone further back and he was thinking of the day that he had ushered Agatha Lester into the world and the young mother's life had gone out almost with the first wail of her new-born child.

Neither of the two men spoke, and, after a moment or so, Agatha continued:

"I had suspected for some time that he loved Randal Cranston's wife," she said, in the same calm, quiet tone, her strangely shadowed eyes staring straight before her, "I was in the reading room there during the interview between my husband and Major Le Clare. I heard Le Clare tell my husband of a conversation he had overheard that morning between Mrs. Cranston and him, my husband. They were together in the summer house at Cranston Manor and had declared their mutual love. Major Le Clare had come here for the purpose of making Arthur pay him for his silence. Arthur became enraged and horse-whipped Major Le Clare. After what I had heard, I could no longer doubt that my husband had given his love to another woman. I made up my mind that I would kill him. No other woman should have the love which should have been mine. I thought of her beauty and determined that he should never look upon it again. That night, I think it was about half past ten, I went into the library. Arthur was lying asleep upon that couch near the open window. He had taken more wine at dinner than he was in the habit of taking and was sleeping heavily. My opportunity had come. I knew that Arthur kept a loaded pistol in the drawer of his desk. I found the pistol and shot him through the heart as he slept. I reloaded the pistol and replaced it in the drawer. I regretted afterwards that I had not left the pistol beside him, so as to give the impression that he had killed himself. Though that never occurred to me until I found that Major Le Clare was suspected of the crime. I felt more at peace after I had killed my husband. At least, I could never know again the torture of jealousy, of loving madly, intensely, and in vain. I had my little child to whom to devote my life. But God has taken him, and it matters nothing now what becomes of me."

She sighed wearily as she ceased speaking.

"My God! Agatha this is terrible!" cried Doctor Lorton. "It is too horrible. There is no indication of insanity about you, but you must be mad. You must have been mad when you committed that unnatural crime. Jealousy has driven women insane before. And, now," and he turned to the minister, "what are we to do?"

The minister, very pale, rose slowly to his feet, as he replied:

"Our duty."

CHAPTER XIV.

It was two months before Madeline Cranston, whose feet had gone down to the very portals of the grave, awoke from the stupor, which had succeeded weeks of violent delirium, to consciousness again. And with that consciousness came memory, she remembered the awful events which had stricken her down almost unto death.

"Oh, why did you not let me die?" she moaned, lifting her hollow eyes reproachfully to the face of the nurse who stood beside the bed.

"Come, come, you must not talk like that," the nurse replied, cheerily. "You are very weak now, and that makes you feel a little depressed, but you'll get stronger now right along."

"I hope I shall never get stronger if it is as I fear," answered Madeline, beginning to tremble.

"What is it you fear, dear?" asked the nurse. "Tell me, and, perhaps, I can set your mind at rest, for really you must not agitate yourself in this way."

"Haven't—haven't they arrested my husband for the murder of Arthur Lester?" asked Madeline, in a whisper.

"No, no, indeed," replied the nurse, quickly. "You poor child, dismiss the thought that your husband killed Arthur Lester from your mind forever. He is as innocent as I am of the crime."

"You—you wouldn't deceive me?" faltered Madeline.

"I wouldn't deceive you for the world. That would be cruel. The person who committed the crime has confessed. Now, I am not going to tell you any more at present. Take this soothing draught and go to sleep."

"Thank God!" murmured Madeline, and then she took the draught and was soon sleeping as quietly as a child.

It was two days later, when she had grown stronger, that they told her the truth, that Agatha Lester had confessed that she murdered her husband, that she had been declared insane and died a month after her confession. After she had heard all, Madeline asked the nurse to send her husband to her.

Randal Cranston had not been in his wife's room since she recovered consciousness. As soon as she was out of danger, he began to make preparations to go aw[illegible]

"I will never force my love upon her again," he said to himself. "I will go away and leave her free to obtain a divorce after a little while. She is very young, and, after a while, she will learn to be happy again. As for me—my brief dream of happiness is over forever."

When he received the message that his wished to see him, his heart leaped wildly, then he smiled bitterly

"What a fool I am," he murmured. "I will be calm, she must not know that the mere sight of her has such power to effect me."

So he was outwardly calm and composed when he entered his wife's room.

She was lying upon a couch in a rose colored dressing gown, her ebon hair braided down her back and tied with pink ribbons. Notwithstanding her wanness and her pallor, she was exceedingly beautiful.

As he came forward, she looked up at him and her eyes filled with tears and her lips quivered.

"Oh, you poor Randal, how dreadfully you have suffered!" she cried.

Her voice, the pity in her eyes, her wan loveliness thrilled him through and through, but he only smiled faintly as he said:

"Do not let us talk of myself."

She did not speak until he had seated himself at some little distance from the couch. If he could have believed that she cared enough, he would have fancied that she was hurt and chilled by his manner.

"My father tells me that you are going away. Is that true?" she asked, at length

"Yes, it is quite true," he replied.

"And—and when will you return?"

"That I cannot tell you. My return is very uncertain."

"Randal, why are you going?" is it because you do not care for me any more? is it because you hate me and cannot bear the sight of me?"

"I certainly do not hate you," he answered, smiling again very faintly.

"Is it because you cannot forgive me?"

"If there is anything to forgive I have forgiven you. If you wish to know why I am going away it is because I think it will be best for us both. Certainly you will be more contented, more at peace."

"And what if I tell you that you are wrong in believing this?"

"What do you mean?" he asked, almost roughly, struggling to maintain his composure. "You surely cannot wish me to remain when you care nothing for me, when even the sight of me must be distasteful to you."

"Randal, do you think that all this bitter woe and trouble have taught me nothing? I want you to remain that I may atone to you, that I may learn to care for you—even as you care for me."

He arose, and coming forward stood looking down upon her with all his soul in his eyes.

"But do you think you can ever learn to do that?" he asked, his voice tremulous and broken.

A soft flush stole over the pallor of her beautiful face as she looked up at him.

"I do not think that I shall find it very difficult," she murmured.

He knelt down beside the couch and took her in his arms.

The End

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CHAPTER IV.

A STARTLING SITUATION.

Left to himself, Dick Penfield felt the loneliness of his situation. The glen was as silent as if it were the only place of the dead. The mellow September sunlight glinted through the many colored maples which stood like rifts of flame against the dark green of the willows that fringed the river.

Dick seated himself on a log and tried to think seriously of his situation. The loss of the boat and its precious freight was a serious matter, for it represented a month's work. But the loss was not all the little party had to contend with. The predatory Indians were on the war trail, leaving a trail of devastation, robbery and butchery behind. There was no telling what adventures might befall his friends and him before they could reach home.

These thoughts troubled him and gave him a strange feeling of unrest and a sense of impending danger. He was startled from his reverie by the sound of approaching footsteps, and grasping his rifle he stood ready for approaching—an old man, of some sixty years. He carried a gun slung over his shoulder and was dressed in the garb of a hunter.

"How do you do?" he said, as he approached. "I'm mighty glad to see a white face in these woods."

"Good morning," greeted Dick, hardly knowing whether to be glad or sorry over the stranger's visit.

"Well, it is a good mornin'," replied the strange man. "Reckon it's been a purty dry fer good huntin' though. Stoppin' round here?"

"For a little while," said Dick.

"Huntin'?"

"No, sir; we are on our way home."

"Others with you then?"

"Three others."

"Glad to have you stop in this neck of the woods. My name's Hiram Kinney, an' it's only a little step over to my cabin. What do you call your name?"

Dick mentioned his name.

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Penfield," said Hiram. "Would be glad to have you or any of yer party drop 'round an' see me."

"So you live near here you say?"

The stranger laughed.

"Well, he drawled, "I can't say that I live here, but I have a little shack I hang up in when I'm in this locality. I live mostly round where they say hat's off. But this is the best place for game in this region."

He took a seat on the big log on which Dick was sitting, and drawing a pipe from his pocket, he filled and lighted it.

Dick studied his countenance carefully, but he was not practiced in reading faces, and his scrutiny revealed nothing to his mind. There is an old saying that one never meets a friend for the first time, and Dick thought this might hold good if applied to the wilderness. He did not feel like taking very communicative. It came to Dick as he gazed at the heavy face of the stranger that it might have been through his agency that the boat had been stolen, yet he reasoned that such a thought might be doing the old man an injustice.

"What do you think," asked the stranger after a brief silence.

"At Glenville," replied Dick.

"At Glenville. I have bin down that way a time or two. Ain't many people there."

"Only a few families," said Dick, in fact ran hardly be called a town. Several farmers built their houses together on the river bank so they could protect each other in case the Indians made a raid on the settlement."

"A purty idee. I hear the Sioux are on the rampage down that way, an' it wouldn't a'prise me much if they came this way."

"That is one reason we are in no hurry to continue our journey down the river," said Dick. "The Indians are reported to be pretty thi k south of here."

"That's right. You might run right into a hornet's nest. How are you traveling, by land or by the river?"

Dick hesitated a moment. He was not sure that he would be doing right in explaining the affairs of himself and friends, but still, he thought it could do no harm.

"We have been up the river bee hunting," he said, after a little pause, "and last night, while we were camped on the little island in the river, we found one stole our boat."

"By thunder! You don't say so!" cried the old man. "Well, now that was an onery trick. Have you any trace of it?"

"Not yet. The rest of our party are now out trying to find it, but if the thief went on down the river, we had as well give up at once."

"That's right, my boy. By thunder! that is too bad. I will be glad to help you find the rascal, if he can be found."

"I'm afraid we shall never find him," said Dick. "Unless he should have towed the boat into some of the bayous up the river, it is likely he will escape."

"It would be purty tough on you if you don't git the thief ner your boat either," said Huber, a queer smile on his face.

"Well, we must stretched ourselves lazily, and turning to Dick, said:

"Guess we walk over to my cabin? It ain't but a little step. When we come back I'll see what assistance my help I can be of some use in huntin' yer boat."

Dick could hardly refuse the polite invitation, and with a nonchalant air he followed the stranger up the glen.

They had traveled hardly a quarter of a mile when they made a sudden descent into a sort of canyon, in which stood a rude cabin.

The old hunter threw open the door and the two entered. There was a smouldering fire in the fireplace, and the odor of broiled venison filled the room.

Dick noticed that the table had not been cleared off since breakfast, and he also noticed that there were two tin plates that had been used, and other indications that the old hunter had had breakfasted alone.

A glance about the room assured Dick, that there was no other person present, yet there had been some one else there, was evident. If the hunter had a partner, why had he not mentioned the fact? It was a trivial thing, but some how it served to strengthen the doubt that was lurking in Dick's mind.

He took the stool Huber gave him, and the two sat down near the open door.

Dick could not help but mark the seclusion of the place in which the cabin had been erected. One might approach it from any direction and be still within a few rods of it.

The hunter must have read what was in Dick's mind, for he said:

"This is about as snug a place to git out of the way from the Indians as one could be found in a day's travel. In fact, a person might pass a hundred yards of it a dozen times an' never see it."

He paused a moment, and then went on: "As I was goin' to say' if I had some chap here that I wanted to keep as a prisoner, my friends might look a long time ter find him."

At these words a sudden pang of fear seized Dick, for he realized that they were intended for him in some way. That the old fellow was a villain who had some designs in bringing him to the out of the way place, he had no doubt in his mind.

He was seized with a sudden impulse to leap from the room and run for it, but a sort of fear held him motionless.

"You see," went on the hunter, "that I have planned for such a case to meet any emergency, as I may take it into my head to have you remain with me for a spell as my guest. It won't be likely that any of your friends will ever stumble onto this place."

"What do you mean?" asked Dick, a cold terror coming over him, for there was something in the cruel words of the old man that convinced him that the fellow was mad.

"What do I mean?" repeated Huber, with an evil grin. "I can soon explain. I am going to keep you here a little while, an' if you make a move to git away, I'll kill you!"

CHAPTER V.

A TERRIBLE SITUATION.

As Dick listened to the words of the man, a sudden panic of terror seized him. His first impulse was to leap to his feet and try to reach the cover of the woods before the old hunter could detain him, but he paused, for something in the face of the man, as he handled his pistol in his belt, told him that such an act might be to court death.

That the fellow was an outlaw or a madman, Dick was now fully convinced. But he was more inclined to the belief that it was madness. There could be no reason, that he saw, why any one should have any desire to hold him a prisoner there. It was with an effort, that Dick retained sufficient composure to speak calmly.

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"Why, what do you mean?" he asked.

The old hunter laughed. It was not a good laugh to hear, and there was something in it that caused a vague fear to settle at Dick's heart.

"What do I mean?" said the old man. "Well, we will not bother our heads about that just now."

"But I demand to know," insisted Dick. "What object have you in speaking of detaining me here?"

"I can't tell you just yit."

As he spoke he made a sudden leap, and quick as a flash he threw his arms about Dick and held him as if he had been in a vise.

Dick struggled desperately, fully believing that he was in the hands of a madman, but he was as a baby in the hands of the old man.

"Don't you try any squirmin' an' kickin'," warned his captor, "for you can't git away. Better take it cool an' save your strength."

Without more ado he dragged Dick to the center of the room, and then with a quick movement opened a trap door. The next instant Dick was thrust through the opening and dropped into the darkness below.

Dick fell some six or seven feet and landed on a soft, clayey floor, panting for breath and bewildered. The darkness was so intense that he could see nothing as he tried to gaze about him, and glancing up, could see the head of the old hunter at the opening.

He was chuckling audibly, and there was an evil look on his face as he fixed his eyes on the darkness below.

"I reckon you'll have time to do a power

"If you make a noise I'll kill you!"

of guessin' before you git out," he said, "an' I warn you that it will be as well for you not to make any noise."

The terror of Dick's situation forced itself on him with crushing force. To be shut in a dismal prison such as this, by one whom he fully believed to be a maniac, and in a place where it was almost useless to hope for assistance, was something to bring fear to the stoutest heart.

Dick realized that it was useless to talk to the man, yet he could not refrain from protesting against his treatment. But what could be done to a madman that would avail anything?

"Look here," Dick said, "don't you think this is a shabby way to treat a visitor?"

The old man laughed again.

"It all depends," he said. "I might have a reason."

"What reason can you have?" asked Dick. "I am a stranger to you, and surely you can have no sane object in doing me harm—especially as I have never harmed you."

"That's the fact," replied the old hunter, "but a feller can't allers act as he might like to. Jist you keep quiet an' save strength. Into trouble you'll git again after awhile."

With that the trap door was closed abruptly and Dick was left in the blackest darkness. He uttered a cry of protest, but the only response was the sound of the trap door being fastened. Then he hard footsteps leaving the cabin, the faint sound of the door being closed and all was silent.

Dick leaned against the wall of his prison in a sort of dumb despair. There was something so unexpectedly strange in the adventure into which he had fallen, that it seemed useless to try to solve the mystery of it. If the old hunter was not mad, what had induced him to act thus? Robbery could not be the motive, since Dick had nothing worth a robber's while. The more Dick thought of these things, the more perplexed and bewildered he became.

Even though he was shut in the confines of the dark cellar, he could not remain inactive. He felt a natural desire to explore his prison, and putting out his hands before him, he moved forward. Some three or four steps brought him to the wall, and following it, he made the circuit of the chamber. It could not have been more than seven or eight feet long, by six in width, at the widest. The walls were of rock and soil, roughly cut down by pick and shovel.

He had barely finished his explorations, when a sound came faintly to his ears—a sound that caused his heart to stand still, with sudden fear. It was the prolonged, wavering war-cry of the Sioux! Only once before had Dick heard that cry, and that was when he was but ten years old, when the murderous Sioux had made a raid on the settlement in Minnesota, where he lived with his parents.

The sound of it now sent a cold shiver to his very heart, and for an instant he forgot where he was and everything else, save that the dreaded Sioux were near. Then as he thought of his situation, a panic or horror seized him. There was no doubt that the redskins were very near and that they were within the cabin. While it was possible that they would never think to look in the cellar, nor dream of its existence, yet he knew enough of the character of the Sioux to realize that they would never leave the building without setting fire to it. Should they do so, he would be like a rat caught in a trap, with no way of escape, and his fate would be worse than if he should fall into their hands.

The yells of the savages came nearer and nearer. Dick still had an idea that the old hunter might return at any moment, barricade the door and hold the Indians at bay, with his rifle. But he did not return, and in a few moments a series of guttural sounds coming from above, mingled with the fall of moccasined feet on the floor, told that the redskins had entered the cabin.

Dick crouched in his dark prison, a prey to the most painful anxiety and terror.

He could hear the savages going through the house and plundering it, and every moment he half expected that they would lift the trap-door and discover him.

He had a vivid remembrance of the outrages committed by the Sioux in Minnesota years before, and the details of these horrifying incidents came back to his mind with great distinctness. The many cases where whole families had been butchered, and in some cases men, boys and girls had been taken away captives and kept for years before they were finally restored to their parents.

By the sounds of the footsteps above, he knew that there were a large number of Indians in the cabin, and the way in which they were leaping and scuffling over the floor, told him that they were contesting with each other for the spoils.

Presently he could hear the Indians leaving, and it was with a breath of relief that he heard the sound of the last one departing. Then there came the sharp staccato

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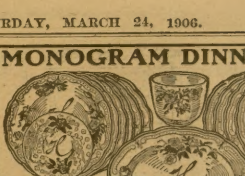

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of war-cries, and they grew fainter and fainter.

Dick drew a breath of infinite relief. They were gone and it was not likely that they would re-visit the cabin. But his feelings of elation was of short duration. His sharp ear caught an ominous sound, a sharp, crackling noise that told the dreadful truth. The Indians had set fire to the cabin!

CHAPTER VI.

LOST IN THE WOODS.

It would be impossible to describe the feeling of unutterable despair that came over Dick Penfield, as he listened to the sound of the crackling flames in the cabin overhead. Like a rat caught in a trap, he was helpless and at the mercy of the flames.

But he was not one to give up without a struggle. He climbed up the wall, thrusting his fingers into the crevices between the rocks and succeeded in reaching the trap-door. Then getting a footing on a projecting rock, he pushed against the trap-door with all his might, but it did not yield. The old hunter had done his work well. Again and again, Dick beat upon the trap door until strained every muscle in his effort to push it from its fastenings, but all to no avail.

As he paused, he was attracted by the sound of a step on the floor overhead. Had some of the Indians returned? or was it the old hunter?

These questions had barely flashed through his mind, when he heard the steps more distinctly. Some one was moving back and forth across the room in great haste, and mingled with the sound was the splash of water being thrown against the wall.

Some one was trying to extinguish the fire. It could not be an Indian. A terrible hope leaped into Dick's breast. He pounded on the door and called loudly.

Instantly, some one came to the trap-door. It was thrown open and the next instant the face of Peter Moers, the German, was thrust over the opening.

A cry of joy came from Dick's lips.

"Oh, Mr. Meetz, I am so glad!" he cried. "I was afraid to be burnt to death in this awful place."

"Py shimminy, dot vos some pretty fix," cried Peter, reaching his head down and drawing Dick up through the opening.

As Dick emerged from the cellar, a single glance told him that the flames had so spread through the inside of the cabin, that it was quite useless to try to extinguish them.

"If we vos gettin' out of dis perty quick I vos not some fool," cried Peter, leading the way to the door.

Dick felt like hugging the German for sheer joy, as he followed him. It was as if he had been snatched from the very jaws of death.

On reaching the door, Peter peered cautiously out, and then with a low injunction for Dick to hurry, darted into a thicket close to the cabin. Here they crouched low among the brush, keeping a sharp lookout for the Indians, whose whereabouts could be heard in almost every direction.

"I tol' you dot dose savvy vos hafin' der time of der lifes," said Peter, in a cautious whisper. "Ven I see dot cagin vos on fire I shust say to myself: 'Peter, dot vos der place for you. Dot thunder nefer strike in dot same place.' So I sit right in dat to bite. But ven I try to put ouit dot fire, it vos too mudch for me, an' ven I hear dot knockin' on der floor, der you ves! Vat vos you der for?"

Dick explained.

"Py shimminy, dot old hunter vos some whole lunatic anyhow. I bet you him I knock der lifer outt of him so quick dot he can't hear somepody say, 'Rhatchman.'"

It was more than an hour before the two felt any degree of safety, but even then they did not venture to emerge from their place of concealment.

Meantime, the cabin had burned to the ground, and only a great heap of glowing coals marked the spot where it had stood.

Peter Mertz had passed through some startling adventures since leaving the camp, and he related these to Dick as the two sat in the thicket.

He had started down the river to look for the missing boat, but had gone less than a half mile when he heard the whoops of the Sioux coming up the stream, and he turned back, only to almost run into another band. It was with the greatest good fortune that he escaped falling into their hands.

He soon came to the cabin, and was forced to go far out of his course on his return up the river. This is how he happened to come upon the old hunter's cabin in which Dick had been lured by the old hunter.

"If I don't hoppen along vat I did," said Peter, "der greasy loafers would hat got cagin burnt to der ground, an' you vos cooked alife."

"That's about the size of it," replied Dick, who could not keep from shaking as he thought of the horror of his situation. "I tell you, Mr. Mertz, I'll never forget how you happened to come when you did."

"Dot is vot is vos," nodded Peter.

It was some time before the two ventured to emerge from their place of concealment, and when they did, they took a sharp lookout that they did not run into some strolling band of roving Indians.

Dick was very anxious about the fate of Dodson and Joe, for it was hardly to be expected that they had escaped an encounter with the Indians. But one thing consoled Dick, and that was the thought that Dodson was an old hunter and trapper who had spent most of his life amid the perils of the frontier. He knew the Indians of the North as few others did, and would not be at a loss to know how to meet the cunning of such a foe.

Dick and the German, on leaving the thicket in which they had been concealed, hurried in the direction of the spot where they had established their camp, some hours before.

They were hopeful that on reaching the spot they would find the old hunter and Joe already there, but in this they were disappointed.

It was plain that the Indians had not visited the camp, for every thing was as it had been left. But there was no evidence to show that the hunter and Joe had returned.

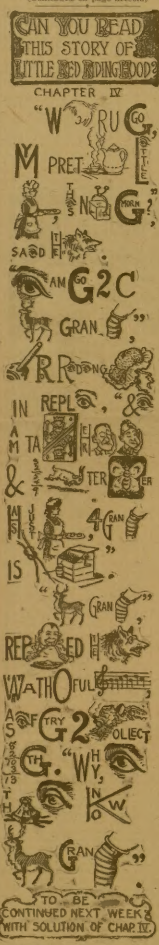
"They were hiding from the Indians," Dick ventured, "just as we had been doing, and they will soon return."

While waiting for the return of their friends, Dick and the German, made a careful search about the locality, to make sure that no Indians were lurking near.

By this time it was far on toward sunset, and as both Peter and Dick felt very hungry, they set about to prepare something to eat, though they were very careful to kindle but a small blaze. When they had cooked and eaten their meal, they extinguished the fire and sat down to await the return of Dodson and Joe.

Dick was now greatly alarmed at the long absence of the two, and about dusk he was moved by a sudden impulse to go in

(Continued on page fifteen.)



Solution of Chapter III.

Red Riding Hood had set down her basket to pick some wild flowers when she heard a gruff voice say, "Good morning."

Turning, she saw a wolf beside her. The wolf bowed politely, though he gazed at her with a hungry eye.

But he was afraid to attack her then, for he could hear the ringing of the axes of the woodcutters near at hand, and he knew if she screamed they would be upon him at once.

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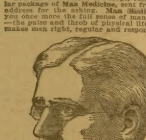

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The Young Bee Hunters.

(Continued from page fourteen.)

search of his strangely missing comrades.

"Anything is better than this suspense," he said to the German, "and I am going to take a little run up the river and see what I can discover."

"You want to look out for some," warned Peter. "If dem reskins see you, you vas dead in fifteen minutes."

"Oh, you can depend on me to be careful," said Dick.

He made his way cautiously up the stream, keeping in the shadows of the trees and moving with great caution.

He had lost his pistol while struggling with the old hunter in the cabin, but he had obtained another from the German, and now carried it in his hand ready for instant use.

He realized that he might at any moment run onto a band of the redskins, and he was determined not to be taken off his guard.

Now and then he would pause and listen intently. No sounds came to his ears but the low murmur of the night wind among the branches overhead and now and then the cry of some bird that came from the surrounding gloom.

Neither moon nor stars were visible, for the sky was overcast by thin vapory clouds. Yet there was a sort of uncertain light that came from the fleecy clouds which rendered objects plainly visible in the open. However, in the shadows of the forests, the gloom lay thick and heavy, and at times it was impossible for Dick to do more than grope his way.

He followed the course of the river for some time, but turning aside to cross a deep ravine, he became bewildered and lost his way. He started in what he supposed, was the direction of the river, but after traveling for half a mile, he became convinced that he had lost his bearing.

He stood for some time in silence, hoping that he might be guided back to his course by the roar of the river, but no sound of it reached him.

The unpleasant fact that he was lost, now began to force itself upon his mind, and in his bewilderment he knew not what to do. To continue traveling might carry him further and further away from his friends. Yet he could not content himself to remain inactive.

If he could only find the river he would have little trouble in returning to camp, but here was the difficulty.

He reproached himself bitterly for having left the bank of the river. It was a most serious predicament to be lost in the great woods that stretched for miles and miles in every direction, and especially at a time when the country was infested with bands of hostile savages, whose deeds had spread a panic throughout the settlement.

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A MOTHER'S LOVE.

What is More Beautiful than a Mother's Love?

"Who can to help me when I tell
And would some pretty story tell,
Or kiss the place to make it well.
My mother."

A mother's worries are many. She sometimes forgets her own bodily discomforts because of her overpowering love for the child. She becomes broken down, sleepless, nervous, irritable and feels tired from morning until night. Many mothers of experience can tell you that at such a time they have been relieved, benefitted and strengthened and put into proper health by taking a prescription which their mothers had told them was the best woman's tonic and nervine to be taken at such times. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription has enjoyed an enviable reputation for over a third of a century. In all that time it has sold more largely in the United States than any other tonic for woman's needs, and to-day its sales are greater than ever. Dr. Pierce made up this prescription from native medicinal roots without the use of a particle of alcohol and for the single purpose of curing those diseases peculiar to women and when there is a lack of womanly strength to bear the burdens of maternal duty. How true women come to this critical time with adequate strength. The reason why so many women sink under the strain of motherhood is because they are unprepared. Is preparation is required for motherhood? asks the young woman. And every experienced mother answers—Yes! It is certainly advise expectant mothers to use Doctor Pierce's Favorite Prescription," writes Mrs. J. W. G. Stephens, of Mills, Va. The reason for this advice is that Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is the best prescription for the maternal function. No matter how healthy and strong a woman may be, she should use "Favorite Prescription" as a preparative for maternity without gain of health and comfort. But it is the women who are not strong who best appreciate the great benefits received from the use of "Favorite Prescription." For one thing its use makes the baby's advent practically painless. In many cases reduced the days of suffering to a brief few hours. It has changed the period of anxiety and struggle into a time of ease and comfort.

A DUTY WOMEN OWE THEMSELVES.

"Good actions speak louder than words," and so does the testimony of many thousands of women during a third of a century. It is by such that its merits claims not backed by any such record of cures.

Miss Emma Petty, 11268 S. Olive Street, Indianapolis, Ind., Past Vice-President, Daughters of Pocahontas, Minnesh Council, also Organist, South Baptist Church, Indianapolis, writes: "For several years I suffered with leucorrhœa, which was a serious drain on my vitality, sapping my strength and causing severe headaches, back-pain and a general worn-out feeling, until I really had no desire to live. I had many medicines recommended to me and tried many, but did not get permanent relief until I took Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. In two months I was much better and stronger, and in four months I was well. Have had no more disagreeable discharge, no more pain; so I have every reason to praise 'Favorite Prescription' I consider it without an equal for ills of women."

All the ingredients entering into Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription are printed in plain English on each bottle wrapper. Dr. Pierce therefore shows that he is not afraid to tell his patients just what this medicine is made of. This is not true of any other medicine especially designed for the cure of woman's peculiar ailments. This "Prescription" is also the only woman's medicine sold through druggists that does not contain a large percentage of alcohol. It contains not a drop.

As an indication of the high esteem in which the medical profession are coming to regard the several ingredients of which Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, for weak and ailing women is composed, we have room here to insert only the following:

Dr. John Fyfe, of Sangatuck, Conn., Editor of the Department of Therapeutics in THE EUCLECTIC MEDICAL REVIEW says of Unicorn root (*Helonias Dioica*) one of the chief ingredients of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription: "A remedy which invariably acts as a uterine invigorator and always leaves a condition which makes for normal activity of the entire reproductive system, cannot fail to be regarded as valuable of the utmost importance to the general practitioner of medicine."

"In Helonias we have a medicament which more fully answers the above indications than any other drug with *which I am acquainted*. In the treatment of diseases peculiar to women it is seldom that a case is seen which does not present some indication for this remedial agency."

"The following are among the leading indications for Helonias: Pain or weight in the pelvic region; chronic atonic (weak) conditions of the reproductive organs of women, manifesting themselves in associated with chronic diseases of the reproductive organs of women, constant pelvic heat in the region of the kidneys; menorrhagia, ("flooding") due to a weakened condition of the reproductive system; amenorrhœa, arising from or accompanying an abnormal condition of the digestive organs and an anæmic (thin blood) habit; dragging sensations in the extreme lower part of the abdomen."

If more or less of the above symptoms are present, no invalid woman can do better than take Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, one of the leading tonics of which is Unicorn root, or Helonias.

MEN AND WOMEN

should have a medical book handy, for knowledge is power. They should know about anatomy and physiology. They should have a book that treats of the sexological relations of both sexes out of and in wedlock, as well as how and what to advise son and daughter. Has unequaled endorsement of the press, ministry, legal and medical professions. The main cause of unhappiness, ill-health, sickly children, and divorce are admitted by physicians and shown by court records to be the violation of the laws of self and sex. A standard work is the People's Common Sense Medical Adviser, by R. V. Pierce, M. D. Send 21 one-cent stamps for the cloth-bound book, or 21 stamps for the paper-covered volume. Address Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

MR. WHAMMY-CUM WHIM.

Some times when boys is cuttin' up,
Or poundin' wif their birfday cup
Against th' table—cause most boys
Jist hat to keep a-makin' noise—
Their pa he says for them to stop
Or else they're go' hear somepin drop!
An' they don't hear their pa, nor pay
Attin-chun when he talks that way.
Why, nen old Mister Whammy-cum-whim,
So lean, an' long, an' light, an' slim—
Why, it sometimes he takes those boys
'At's makin' all this awful noise
An' won't hear what their pa he says,
An' punishes in diff'rent ways.

One time there is a boy 'at makes
So much noise 'at th' house let shakes!
An' when his pa he says to "quit!"
This boy he jist don't hear a bit—
An' nen old Mister Whammy-cum-whim
He come, an' says he's after him.
An' take that boy up where he's got
More kind o' tools—I don't know what
He ain't got! And he tell this boy,
"I'm go' to tend' you to an-noy
Your pa, when he is tired, an' tries
To rest, an' rest his achin' eyes."
Says he: "For boys 'at let never hears
I'm a way in to-prove their ears!"

Nen old Mister Whammy-cum-whim says:
"Ho!
I ought to a-done this long ago."
He grab that boy an' he stretch his ears—
But he don't pull till he brings th' tears
'Cause this here boy, why, he let can't feel
Th' pull! An' he never even squeal
Till he go to look in th' lookin' glass—
An' his ears is wide, so's 'at he can't pass
Through the door 'less he turn an' go side-ways!

An' Old Mister Whammy-cum-whim he says:
"I'll bet you hear let th' leastest sound
If it's in th' air, or it's underground!
An' I'll bet you mind what you pa says now—
Or at least you will hear him, anyhow!"

Old slim Mister Whammy-cum-whim!
Bad boys better look out for him!

Dreaming and Doing.

Elsie was full of generous plans to help her mother during vacation. She would take all the care of the chickens upon herself, and do the dusting, and even the dishes. But before all, she would pick berries and sell them.

And just the very day before school was out, her mother discovered a patch of wild strawberries in the pasture below their wood lot, so thick that she picked a quart in fifteen minutes. Elsie decided that she would go there early the following morning, before the village boys discovered them.

The first thing after breakfast the next morning, without waiting to wash dishes or dust or look after the chickens, she took two large pails and hurried toward the strawberry patch.

How nice it would be if she could fill both pails, she thought; then she would make—she reached the stone wall and paused to calculate—six quarts and five quarts, that would be eleven. She got a stick to mark the figures in the sand. Eleven quarts at 15 cents; once thirteen was thirteen, once thirteen again was thirteen—oh—three, three and once made four one—why, wasn't it a lot! One dollar and 45 cents.

But she might not be able to sell all the berries. She would call it a dollar. That would buy a new tin dipper, 5 cents; a pound of rice, 5 cents; an apron, calico, 5 cents; a bushel of corn for the hens, 50 cents, and that would leave—eight cents. What should she get with that?

Time passed and still Elsie sat there trying to decide about the disposal of that 20 cents. The shrill whistle of the 12 o'clock express brought her to her feet with a sudden shock.

She sped through the wood lot toward the pasture and heard many voices. At the berry patch she found ten, twenty—the whole school, it seemed—scrambling pell-mell among the vines. O, if she had only come straight here!

On her way home, an hour later, she paused at the wall again, but this time it was not to plan. She thought of the two hours she had lost, and resolved that during the rest of her vacation she would try to do instead of dream; for in the bottom of one of her big pails was less than a quart of half crushed berries and the other pail was quite empty.

Beavers at Work.

In the presence of a great crowd the little trowel-tailed animals at the beaver lake of the Bronx zoological gardens showed their skill in dam building yesterday afternoon. It was the first event of its kind ever witnessed by a gathering of hundreds of human beings.

A little way from the shore of Beaver lake stood a spendid oak, three feet in diameter. In constructing the beaver enclosure it was first planned that the tree be removed, as obstructing the view, but a gray-haired schoolmaster saved the day. If they did not have the opportunity to use their teeth, he said, they would perish.

For some time the little fellows in the lake, while building winter quarters, have been planning and working for the construction of a dam to give them high water that would not freeze solid in winter and to guard their homes from freshets in spring. While some seemed to be surveying and making a structure of stout sticks to hold up as much as possible the tree they had doomed as the chief barrier to the water, others were busily gnawing at the roots and into the lower end of the tree itself. This eventually began to turn, working from the north side of the oak and a little to the west.

While the crowd was watching yesterday volunteers were chosen to make the final attack on the tree. It began to reel, bend over by the force of the wind. The little fellows scattered, and then, peeking from the surface of the water with their bright eyes, watched eagerly.

There was a mighty puff, and down came the oak with a groan. It fell with a splash exactly as had been planned by the beavers. Before the water had cleared they were at it with their tails, plastering at every outlet for the water, eating off the branches to add to the supports of the dam, and carefully breaking the big log from the outer side.—New York Times.

Lucy's Long Night.

"Just let me read this one page," Lucy used to say regularly every night, when it was time to go to bed. At last father got tired of it, and one night, when she begged to read "just that one page," as usual, he said:

"All right. Go ahead, and be sure to go to bed when you have done."

Then he sent the other children to bed,

Teacher—Benny, what is an octopus?
Benny—Guess it mus' be an eight-legged cat.

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Tommy's Warm Weather.

Tommy's father owned an orange grove in the lake region of Florida.

One evening it seemed to be growing colder, and he made frequent trips to the thermometer on the piazza north of the house.

"I do hope it won't get down enough to do any damage." Tommy heard his father say, as he returned for the fourth or fifth time from the piazza.

"How does it get down, papa?" asked Tommy.

Mr. Williams explained that the silver line inside was called mercury, and that when it got down to a certain point water would freeze, and it did, kept going down great damage would be done.

After his father left, Tommy went to the piazza and climbed up on a chair, to see if the mercury was still going down. And then a bright idea came to him.

When Mr. Williams returned to examine the thermometer once more, it was gone.

"O, Tommy," he called, "where's the thermometer?"

"It's all right, papa," answered Tommy, gleefully, as he danced toward him. "That mercury thing's gone up over so higher'n it was when you was here. It's just as nice an' warm," and he led the way to the heat-house and drew out the thermometer from under a setting hen. Sure enough! The mercury had gone up ever so high, and it indicated such warm weather that father was obliged to turn away his face to laugh.

The Cute Boy.

"When you stepped upon that gentleman's foot, Tommy, I hope you apologized."

"Oh, yes; indeed I did," said Tommy, "and he gave me 10 cents for being such a good boy."

"Did he? And what did you do then?"

"Stepped on the other and apologized, but it didn't work."

Where Nickel Got His Name.

The word came from the Swedish and is connected with Old Nick, an evil spirit. The reason it is applied to the metal we know as nickel is because its ore which is copper colored, deceived the miners, who expected to obtain copper from it.

O, JOYOUS THOUGHT.

A dear little lass of Tralee
Exclaimed: "O, how nice it will be!
When I have the cream and buns,
And mince pie and jam,
Because we have company by to tea!"

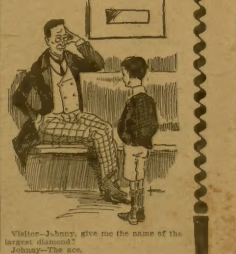
Why It's So.

Simkins—Willikins seems to think he knows it all.

Timkins—Well, he's not to blame.

Simkins—Not to blame!

Timkins—No. He has no children old enough to ask questions.



Visitor—Johnny, give me the name of the largest diamond?

Johnny—The ace.

I WISH'T.

O, dear, I wish't I only knew
Some really bully things to do,
I've been a pirate and a king,
I've played at war like anything,
I've been a lion tamer and
The captain of a circus band,
I've played at hunting the wild boar,
I've been a fighting commodore,
I've been and tried, it seems to me,
Most everything that there can be,
If I can't think of something new
I fear the only thing to do
Will be to close my books and see
If studying is good for me.
But, O, I wish't I only knew
Some other better things to do.

Too Good to be True.

A Kenwood lady, while in a poetic mood the other night, directed her little daughter's attention to the heavens, saying:

"See the beautiful moon. She is the kind mother, and all those twinkling stars are her children."

After little Gertrude had looked over the celestial field for a moment she said:

"Well, I guess Roosevelt ain't got no excuse to scold old Mrs. Moon, anyway."